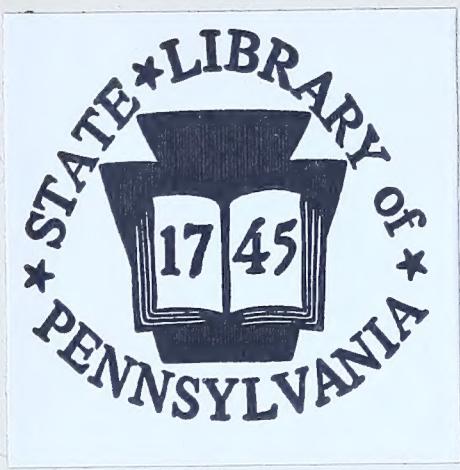


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THE LEVITE OF EPHRIAM AND HIS CONCUBINE

# *History of* **PROSTITUTION**

*Among All the Peoples of the World, From  
the Most Remote Antiquity to  
the Present Day*

*by*

**PAUL LACROIX**  
(Pierre Dufour)

Member of Many Academies and Learned Societies  
French and Foreign

*Translated from the original French by*

**SAMUEL PUTNAM**

**VOLUME ONE**

CHICAGO  
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*To you all*  
*This Edition of HISTORY OF PROSTITUTION, in three volumes,*  
*issued to subscribers only, is limited to twelve hundred and fifty*  
*numbered sets, of which this is Number* 1117

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CHICAGO

“Bibliophile Jacob”  
And the Crimson Splash  
(Translator’s Foreword)

This HISTORY OF PROSTITUTION, by Paul LaCroix, “Pierre Dufour” or “Bibliophile Jacob,” as its author was variously known to the reading public of the nineteenth century, is not a work of literature, though it may possess literary qualities. It is not even a work of pure science, though it already has proved its value to the savants of sex, who have drawn upon it freely. It is, rather, one of the most curious and most human of documents and, as such, an invaluable source book to scientist or *littérateur*.

To understand the book, you have to understand the man. Here, fortunately, we are not overhampered by facts; it does not take M. Andre Maurois and his school to prove to us that biography is always most fascinating when it approaches the novel form.

Despite his impressive labors as an historian of manners, labors which have won for him only a few lines of type in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, there is scarcely a word in English about the man today. Go into any respectable public library, and you will find an English translation of one of his works on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, while in the French section you will encounter his Napoleon III, his volumes on French manners, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, his *Livre d’or des métiers* (a treasury for all interested in the grand old art of printing), his opus on the iconography of Molière or his *Curiosités des sciences occultes*. But with the exception of Ernest Dowson’s translation of the *Memoires of Cardinal Dubois*, a

copy of which I am unable at the moment to lay my hands upon, references to Lacroix himself are practically nil.

The Britannica account is as follows:

*LACROIX, PAUL* (1806-1884), French author and journalist, was born in Paris on the 27th of April, 1806, the son of a novelist. He is best known under his pseudonym of P. L. Jacob, bibliophile, or "Bibliophile Jacob," suggested by the constant interest he took in public libraries and books generally. Lacroix was an extremely prolific and varied writer. Over twenty historical romances alone came from his pen, and he also wrote a variety of serious historical works, including a history of Napoleon III, and the life and times of the Tsar Nicholas I of Russia. He was the joint author with Ferdinand Séré of a five-volume work, *LE MOYEN AGE ET LA RENAISSANCE* (1847), a standard work on the manners, customs and dress of those times, the chief merit of which lies in the great number of illustrations it contains. He also wrote many monographs on phases of the history of culture. Over the signature Pierre Dufour was published an exhaustive *HISTOIRE DE LA PROSTITUTION* (1851-1852), which has always been attributed to Lacroix. His works on bibliography were also extremely numerous. In 1883 he was appointed librarian of the Arsenal Library, Paris. He died in Paris on the 16th of October, 1884.

Such the reward of a lifetime of patient digging in historic and literary cemeteries! But when we reflect that Remy de Gourmont (at least in the edition I possess) does not get even a mention. . . . Suppose, then, we follow the example of M. Maurois and his imitators and do what our subject himself doubtless would have done: reconstruct our own picture of "Bibliophile Jacob."

Personally, I picture him as one of those slight, stooping, grayishly young individuals who are to be found browsing with an aimless intentness in the weird twilight of library stacks or peering out from behind their pyramided quartoes in a dim reference-room corner—peering out, intently always, into space and the nowhere of day-dreams. I can hear, too, the curt voice of the

dapper young library attendant, whose eye is only for the clock. I can see our friend Jacob bundling up his bulky *cahiers*—with one last look, perhaps, at some treasured page—and ambling forlornly out into the crepuscular isolation of the Parisian boulevards. Some *flâneur*, this scholarly old chap! I think, possibly, even before turning his steps to the modest-priced café and liqueur which have known him for years, he may wander across the *pont* and lose himself for another hour among those marvelous bookstalls on the Left Bank. After all, what is time to one who has glimpsed a Baconian eternity by taking all knowledge for his province?

And then, after he has said goodnight to the *garçon* who has helped him on with his scraggly overcoat, he takes his way to his lodgings. . . . But we must stop; our picture is becoming entirely too sentimental. And so, we will leave him at his threshold, without even knowing whether there is a Madame LaCroix or not—or, it may be, a herd of little LaCroixs. Have we not hinted that it is better not to be hampered by facts?

Our picture, of course, may be all wrong. It is possible our bibliophile acquaintance was what is known, in ultra-modern parlance, as a “heller.” Did he, of an evening, pursue his studies in manners amid the brightly lighted haunts of those “daughters of joy,” whose ways he seems to know so well? Were his studies “from the life,” as our friends of “the quarter” used to say?

This last is possible, but not, I think, probable. There is a fact which the unlearned world does not, ordinarily, know, and that is this: that there is, even in the mustiest books of the most by-gone age, a very real and palpitating life of the mind to be lived; and it was this life, I fancy, that “Bibliophile Jacob” knew. His erudition is Teutonic and Titanic. Like the cultured German, he appears, at some remote and mythical period of his life, to have read every word on every subject that was ever put into print. And yet, such a one (I have known the case in life) is, frequently, never to be caught reading!

For Jacob is a bibliophile, not a professor. That is his saving

grace. A bibliophile is, simply, a chap who has chosen to live his life between rows of type; but the point is, he *lives*. A professor, on the other hand, is an inhuman and fossilized machine. Your professor never makes mistakes, while your bibliophile is human, all too human. And so it happens, the latter, by this very human and erring quality, gets a good deal more out of books than the other does.

\* \* \* \* \*

Take the subject of PROSTITUTION, for example. For thousands of years, since long before the dawn of history, Prostitution has been the most glaring of social phenomena. Religious leaders, from Buddha and Confucius to Socrates, Christ, Mohammed and St. Augustine, have fulminated against it; legislators, from Moses and Lycurgus to the contemporary Comstocks, have drawn statutes to crush it, or at least have endeavored to curb its ravages; yet scholars (even today, when sociology is an educational fad) have left it almost wholly untouched. It is, it seems, one of the tribal taboos. The few who have dared to touch it—our Krafft-Ebings, our Forels, our Havelock Ellises, etc.—find themselves, more or less, contraband authors on our bookstalls: I shall not forget the severe snubbing I received when I made inquiries of a metropolitan book-clerk regarding the “*Psychology of Sex*”!

It required, then, some little courage on the part of Lacroix to tackle such a subject. His work met with the reception which might have been anticipated. Even Paris, traditionally so “gay” and so “*blasé*”—even Paris was shocked. And the result: the *Histoire de la Prostitution* is almost unknown today. It is only to be found, if found at all, in those mysterious regions of public libraries known as “the vaults,” where the best reading is frequently to be had, or rather, is not to be had.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet LaCroix’ book is, as has been said, a valuable storehouse. He gathers here an amazing variety of facts from sources often astonishingly obscure. His authorities range from Aristotle on

the Athenian constitution to papyri representing the latest archaeological discoveries of his age, from Talmudic commentators to mediaeval glossarists, from almost unheard-of historians to erotic poets, whose works have long since been forgotten, and great lovers long since dead. It all might have been very dull stuff, as dull as a doctor's thesis or a college textbook. Fortunately, however, "Bibliophile Jacob" was bigger than his facts, bigger than his books. He felt behind the latter, felt a warm something that meant life. And so, at times, his facts not merely live; they sing and dance. He is not possessed, for one thing, of too overweening a respect for them; he is capable, upon occasion, of treating them as nonchalantly as does the modern school of fictionizing biographer.

Take, for example, the thing he does to and with the poets of imperial Rome—Horace, particularly. For my own part, I had grown tired of Horace—indeed, I never had warmed up to him greatly—and had not looked at him for a number of years; until I was on the verge of sharing Giovanni Papini's estimate of "the fat plagiarist." What repelled me most was the radiating frigidity of the *Odes*. Had the man who wrote them ever really *felt* anything? If I ever had been on the verge of discovering such a sensitivity in those Alcaic and Asclepiadean strophes, a professorial voice, droning out prosody and syntax, had speedily stifled the perception. Above all, I never for a moment was permitted, by the professor who taught the class or the one who edited the text, to suspect that Q. Horatius Flaccus might have been a naughty boy and the jolliest of men about town. The prospective Baptist divinity student who sat next to me, and who thought Horace was "so poetic," would, I am sure, have fainted dead away at any such revelation. *Carpe diem* and other Epicurean passages were gently glossed over. . . .

And then, I pick up the *History of Prostitution*: "We shall first pass in review the loves of Horace, in order to make the acquaintance of the great courtezans of his time." After reading of Neaera, Inachia, Cinara, Gratidia, Lycé, Lalagé, Barine, Tyn-

daris, Lydia, Chloë, Glycera, Phyllis, and Lydé—not to mention Lysiscus, Ligurinus and a few others of the opposite sex—I find myself going back to the *Odes* and *Epodes* with a new and keener interest. But take one of the current collegiate editions, read the professorial “biography” that prefaces it, and you would never be able to make out whether Horace was a Sunday school superintendent or a Boy Scout. Read the gingerly, spinsterish “summaries” that precede the pieces; for example, this one: “The coarseness of this epode leads to omission of any outline of its contents.” Oh, what’s the use? To Hades with the professors! We’ll read our poet. We read him and like him. We find him not only human, but poetic. “Bibliophile Jacob” has turned the trick; he has done what all the Ph. D.’s could not accomplish: he has made Horace *live*.

A mood? Probably. I give it to you for what it is worth. If a book satisfies my mood, it satisfies me.

\* \* \* \* \*

And yet, our friend, Jacob, is capable of doing some tall moralizing, himself. Indeed, his tendency in this direction may make you suspicious, or even prove a bit wearisome, until you begin to get the joke. There is one there; I leave it for you to find. In my opinion, the boy is a sly old fox. He may repeat with Martial—or was it Pliny?—“*Lasciva est nobis pagina, vita proba est*,” but he scores his points; he is master of the little trick which the Roman rhetoricians knew as *praeteritio*, which consists in stating that you are not going to mention a thing and then mentioning it at some length and with considerable gusto. And when he is through with these *praeteritiones*, there is not a vast deal of human virtue left standing. Certainly, there are no flaming pillars of sexual morality. Even Moses himself is seen to be human, as we watch him taking an Ethiopian concubine at the age of 104, not to speak of what happens to Socrates, Plato and others whose peccadilloes are somewhat better known. This alone is an accomplishment.

The truth is, Christian morality has many literary sins to answer for.

“Among the Romans as among the Greeks,” LaCroix tells us, “it was the erotics who had to suffer most from the prescriptions of Christianity. In vain, poetry demanded grace for them; in vain, they sought refuge under the enlightened and liberal protection of the learned amateurs of antiquity; in vain, they were perpetuated from mouth to mouth in the memory of voluptuaries and gallant ladies: Christian morality pursued them impitiously. . . . They disappeared, they were all effaced, with the exception of those who, like Martial and Catullus, were, happily, protected by their poetic reputations. Religious scruple even went so far as to tear out many pages from the works of the best writers. Latin literature lost thus the majority of its poets of pagan love, and this systematic destruction was the work of the Fathers of the Church. . . .”

And then comes the tragedy:

“The courtezans and libertines were less stubborn than scholars in defending their favorite authors; for libertines and courtezans, in becoming old, became devout and burned their books. It is scholars who have preserved for us Horace, Catullus, Martial and Petronius.”

Scholars and men like “Bibliophile Jacob.” The latter, in the present work, helps preserve for us that golden age when hetairai wrote books of philosophy and mathematical treatises and still, unlike that awful creature, the female “intellectual” of today, preserved their complexions, their figures and their pleasing ways; when every high-grade courtezan kept a court of poets, and every poet had a courtezan for the mistress of his verses; when even Diogenes forsook his tub to display his amorous cynicism in the public highway; and when. . . . But read.

\* \* \* \* \*

You need not look for literary graces in LaCroix. You may find them, now and then, but they are likely to be due to naïveté, rather than to auctorial deliberation. The style, on the whole, is

simple, easy and flowing; only in spots is there a hint of turgidity. The author's vocabulary is a trifle limited, especially when he waxes moralistic; one becomes a little fed up with such adjectives as "shameful," "shameless," "infamous," etc. But that, as has been said, is part of the joke. When we read of those hetairai "who did much harm to manners and much good to letters and the arts," or when, à propos of the Egyptian princess who built a pyramid with the fruit of her nocturnal labors, we are told that "Science has not yet computed how many stones there are in that pyramid," we feel sure that "P. L. Jacob, *bibliophile*," would have made an excellent companion of an evening, over a bottle of old Madeira.

S. P.

Chicago, November 16, 1926.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND NOTE**

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All footnotes in this edition are by the translator.



## HISTORY OF PROSTITUTION



## INTRODUCTION

**I**F IT is difficult to define the word *Prostitution*, how much more difficult is it to describe its history in ancient and modern times! This word *Prostitution*, which brands as with a red iron one of the saddest afflictions of humanity, is employed rather in a figurative than in a literal sense, and it reappears often in spoken or written language without account being taken of its true acceptation. The grave authors of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* (last edition of 1835) have not been able to find for this word a better definition than "abandonment to impudicity." Before them, Richelet was content with a definition still more vague: "Disordered life"; but little satisfied himself with this explanation, the insufficiency of which is a reflection on modesty, he had attempted to complete the sense with a phrase less ambiguous: "It is that illegitimate abandonment which a girl or a woman makes of her body to a person to the end that this person may take with her forbidden pleasures". That phrase in which the authors of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* exhausted their powers of definition does not even tell us all that the word *Prostitution* includes, since the abandonment with which we are concerned here is extended, under certain circumstances, to persons of both sexes, and the pleasures forbidden by religion or morality are often authorized or tolerated by the law. And so we think this word *Prostitution* ought to be traced back to its etymologic source (*Prostitutum*) and be made to include all species of obscene traffic in the human body.

This sensual traffic, which morality reproves, has existed in all centuries and among all peoples; but it has put on the most varied and the strangest forms; it has been modified in accordance with manners and ideas; it has obtained, ordinarily, the protection of legislators; it has entered into political codes and sometimes even into religious ceremonies; it has, almost always and

almost everywhere, conquered its right of the city, so to speak, and it is still, in our day, under the empire of the philosophic perfectionment of societies; it is the obligatory auxiliary to the police of cities; it is the immoral guardian of public morality; it is the sad and indispensable tributary of the brutal passions of mankind.

There is here, it must be confessed, one of the most shameful sores of humanity; but this sore, as ancient as the world, is disguised sometimes in the shade of the hospitable fireside, sometimes in the mysteries of pagan temples, sometimes under the decent veils of legal tolerance; this infamous sore, which is always gnawing away, more or less, at the social body, has found in ancient philosophy and the Christian religion a powerful palliative, if not an absolute remedy; and in the degree to which the people have become more enlightened and better, the inevitable evil of prostitution diminishes in intensity and circumscribes, to some degree, its ravages. One may not hope that it will disappear entirely, since the vicious instincts to which it responds are, unfortunately, inborn in the human species; but one may predict, with certitude, that it will one day hide itself at the bottom of public cesspools, and that it will no longer afflict the gaze of decent folk.

Already, on all sides, in France as well as in all countries subject to a regular government, *Prostitution* sees the number of her agents diminishing, progressively with the number of her victims; she recoils, as though she were accessible to a feeling of modesty, before the development of moral reason; she does not abdicate, but she knows that she is dethroned, and so she wraps herself in her courtezan's robes, dreaming no more of reconquering her immodest kingdom. The moment is not far distant when she will blush for herself, when she will go forth forever from the sanctuary of manners, and when she will fall by degrees into obscurity and forgetfulness. There are certain maladies of the human heart which, like certain physical maladies, end by exhausting themselves and by losing their epidemic or contagious character under the influence of a proper regime of life. The leper

is no longer known to us except by name, and if one meets, here and there, certain rare traces of this terrible plague of the Middle Ages, one realizes happily that they no longer have the power to spread and propagate themselves; and so we have today no more than redoubtable evidences of the influenza, which once devastated an entire population, and which, today, barely attacks certain isolated individuals.

The hour has, therefore, come to write the history of *Prostitution*, at a time when she is tending more and more to efface herself from the memory of man as from the customs of nations. The historian deals with times which are no more; he resuscitates dead things; he reanimates the past and causes it to live again, for the instruction of the present and the future; he gives a body and a voice to tradition. The vast and curious subject which we are going to treat, with the aid of erudition and under the censorship of the severest prudence, this subject—at once delicate and suspect, attaches itself on all sides to the history of religions, of laws, and of manners; though it has been constantly placed in the discard and, as it were, on the index by those historians occupied with ancient and modern manners, laws, and religions. The archeologists alone, such as Meursius, Laurentius, Musonius, etc., have dared to attack the subject, writing on it Latin dissertations, in which the language of Juvenal and Petronius might at its ease *braver l'honnêteté* both in words and in fact.

As for us, wholly concerned with archeology as we are, we shall not forget that we are writing in French, and that we are addressing a French public, which wants to be instructed but which wants, at the same time, to be respected. We shall never lose sight of the fact that this book, prepared leisurely for the advancement of science, must also serve as a guide to morality, and that its principal object is to make vice detestable by unveiling its turpitudes. The Lacedaemonians showed their youth the hideous spectacle of drunken slaves in order to teach them to flee drunkenness. God keep us from any desire to render vice amiable, even by showing it crowned with flowers among the peoples of an-

tiquity! It is here, above all, that we are to be distinguished from archeologists and savants, properly so-called, who do not concern themselves with the morality of facts, and who are not concerned with drawing from those facts philosophic consequences. They dissertate at length, for example, on the scandalous cults of Isis, Astarte, Venus, and Priapus; they unveil monstrosities, they describe infamies, but they forget, in the end, to purify our thoughts and tranquilize our minds by opposing to these impure and degrading images the chaste lessons of philosophy and the beneficent effects of Christianity.

*Prostitution*, in ancient and modern history, exhibits three distinct forms, or degrees, which belong to three different epochs of the life of peoples: 1. hospitable Prostitution; 2. sacred or religious Prostitution; 3. legal or political Prostitution. These three terms sum up well enough the three species of *Prostitution*; M. Rabtaux employs these terms in a learned work on the subject, and we are disposed to follow him, striving for a more general point of view: "Everywhere, as far back as history permits us to go, among all peoples and in all times, we see, as a more or less general fact, woman accepting the most odious slavery, abandoning herself, without choice and without any feeling of attraction, to the brutal ardors of those who covet her. Sometimes, when all moral light has come to be extinguished, the noble and gentle companion of man loses, in this funereal night, the last trace of her dignity and, becoming, through a supreme abasement, indifferent even to the one who possesses her, she takes her place as a vile thing among the gifts of hospitality: those sacred relations from which are born the joys of the fireside and the tenderness of the family no longer possess, among these degraded peoples, any importance, any value. At other times, in the ancient Orient, for example, and to a greater or less degree among nearly all the peoples of ancient and traditional times, by an alliance still more hideous, the sacrifice of modesty in the woman has been coupled with the dogmas of a monstrous naturalism, which exalts all the passions by making them divine; it becomes

the sacred rite of a strange and degenerated cult, and the salary paid to the immodest priestesses is as an offering made to the gods. Among other peoples, finally, among those who hold on the moral ladder the most elevated rung, misery or vice gives over an entire class to the gross impulsions of the senses and the satisfaction of cynic desires, a class relegated to the lowest regions, tolerated, but branded with infamy, a class of unfortunate women for whom debauchery and shame have become a trade."

Thus it may be seen M. Rabautaux regards as an odious slavery what we consider an odious traffic. In short, under its three principal forms, *Prostitution* appears to us more venal than servile, for it is always voluntary and free. As a rite of hospitality, it represents an exchange of greetings with a stranger, who has unexpectedly become a guest, a friend; as a religious rite, it purchases, at the price of a modesty that is sacrificed, the favors of God and the consecration of a priest; as a legal institution, it is established and practised in the manner of all trades: like all trades, it has its rights and its duties, it has its merchandise, its shops, and its customers; it buys and sells; like the most respectable of commercial enterprises, it has no other end than lucre and profit. If these three kinds of prostitution are to be classified under the head of moral and physical servitude, we must assume that Hospitality, Religion, and Law had violently created them, in spite of all resistances and all the revolts of nature. But at no epoch has woman been such a slave that she was not mistress of her body, whether at the domestic fireside, in the sanctuaries of the temples, or in the lupanars of cities.

True *Prostitution* began in the world on that day when woman sold herself as a commodity and this traffic, like most, has been subjected to a multitude of diverse conditions. When woman gave herself in obedience to the desires of her heart and the attractions of the flesh, that was love, that was pleasure; that was not *Prostitution*, which weighs, calculates, which traffics and negotiates. Like pleasure, like love, *Prostitution* goes back to the origin of peoples, to the infancy of societies.

In a state of simple nature, when men are beginning to seek each other out and form unions, promiscuity of the sexes is the inevitable result of a barbarism which has no other rule than instinct. The profound ignorance in which the human soul vegetates hides from it the elementary notions of good and evil. And so, it was possible for *Prostitution* to exist in those early times: the woman, in order to obtain from man a part of the game that he had killed or the fish he had caught, undoubtedly consented to give herself to ardors which she herself did not feel; for a pearly shell, for the bright feather of a bird, for a slug of brilliant metal, she would accord, without attraction and without pleasure, the privileges of love to a blind brutality. This savage Prostitution, it may be seen, is antecedent to all religion, as it is to all legislation; and yet, from these early times of the infancy of nations, the woman did not give herself into servitude, but followed her own free will, her own choice, her own avaricious instincts. When the peoples have begun to collect into groups, when the social bond has divided them into families, when the need of love and of mutual aid has led to fixed and durable unions, the dogma of hospitality engenders another species of prostitution, which we must regard as equally antecedent to moral and religious laws. Hospitality was but the application of that precept, inborn, it may be, in the heart of man, and proceeding from an egoistic foresight rather than from a disinterested generosity, which led to the charity of the gospels: "Do to another what you would that he should do to you." As a matter of fact, in the forests where he lived, man felt the necessity of finding, always and everywhere, at the home of his equals, a place at the fire and at the table, when the chase or his wanderings led him far from his own hut of branches and couch of beast-skins; and so it was a condition of general utility which made of hospitality a sacred dogma, an inviolable law. The guest, among all ancient peoples, was received with respect and joy. His arrival was looked upon as a good omen; his presence brought happiness to the roof that sheltered him. In exchange for this happy influence, which he brought with him, and

which he left wherever he had passed, was it not but justice to put oneself out to please him and to be agreeable to him, each one according to his means? Hence arose that feeling of duty of which he was the object. The husband would voluntarily yield his bed and his wife to the guest whom the gods had brought him; and the woman, tamed to a custom which flattered her capricious curiosity, would lend herself with good grace to this, the most delicate act of hospitality. It is true that she was also led on by hope of a present which the stranger frequently would offer the next day as he took leave of her. This was not the only advantage which she drew from this authorized prostitution, a prostitution prescribed by her own relatives and her husband; she also ran the chance of receiving the caresses of a god or of a genius, who might make her a mother and endow her with a glorious progeny; for, in all religions, in those of India as in those of Greece and Egypt, there was a universal belief in the passage and sojourn of gods among men, under human form. This traveler, this beggar, this deformed and ugly being, who became part of the family as soon as he has crossed the threshold of the house or tent, and who had been installed as master in the name of hospitality, who knew but he might be Brahma, Osiris, Jupiter, or some god in disguise, who had descended among mortals to view them more closely and put them to the test? And would not the woman, in such a case, be purified by the embraces of a divinity? Such was the manner in which guest-prostitution, common to all primitive peoples, was perpetuated by tradition and by custom in the manners of ancient civilization.

Sacred prostitution was almost contemporary with this first variety, which was, in a manner, one of the mysteries of the cult of hospitality. As soon as religions had been born, from the fear inspired in the heart of man by sight of the great commotions of nature, as soon as the volcano, the tempest, the thunderbolt, the earthquake and the angry sea, had led him to invent gods, *Prostitution* offered herself to those same terrible and implacable deities, and the priest took for himself an offering from which the

gods he represented would have been unable to profit. Ignorant and credulous men brought to the altars everything they had that was most precious: the milk of their heifers, the blood and flesh of their bulls, the harvest of their fields, the product of the chase and line and the works of their hands; and so, women were not slow in offering themselves as a sacrifice to the god, that is to say, to his idol or to his priest; priest or idol, it was one or the other which received the offering, sometimes of the virginity of the marriageable girl, sometimes of the modesty of the married woman. Pagan religions, born of hazard and caprice, were formulated in dogmas and principles, fashioned according to the manners and assimilated to the governments of political States: philosophers and priests had planned and carried out with intelligence this work of pious trickery, but they were careful not to cast any reflections on the ancient usages of sacred prostitution: they did nothing but regulate and direct its practice, which they surrounded with bizarre and secret ceremonies. Prostitution became, from then on, the essence of certain cults of gods and goddesses who ordained, tolerated or encouraged it. Hence sprang the mysteries of Lampsacum, of Babylon, of Paphos and of Memphis; hence the infamous traffic which was carried on at the gates of temples; hence those monstrous idols with which the virgins of India prostituted themselves; hence the obscene empire which the priests arrogated to themselves under the auspices of their impure divinities.

It was inevitable that prostitution should pass from religion over into manners and into laws; thence came that legal prostitution which masters society, and which, to this day, corrupts it to the heart. This prostitution, a hundred times more dangerous than that hidden in the shadow of altars and of sacred groves, began to show itself without veils to all eyes and did not even cover itself with the specious pretext of public necessity; it became for the young girl a form of debauchery which engenders all vices. It was then that legislators, struck by the risk which society was running, first had the courage to rise up against prostitution and

to confine it within wise limits; some strove futilely to snuff it out and annihilate it, but they did not dare pursue it into those inviolable asylums offered it by religion on certain feast days and on certain solemn occasions. Ceres, Bacchus, Venus and Priapus protected it against the authority of the magistrates, and moreover, it had penetrated so deeply the customs of the people that it would have been impossible to uproot it without tearing up at the same time the roots of religious dogma. Only a new religion could come to aid the mission of the political legislator and cause sacred prostitution to disappear by imposing on legal prostitution a salutary bridle. This was the task of Christianity, which de-thrones the senses and proclaims the triumph of spirit over matter.

Moreover, Jesus Christ, in his Gospel, had rehabilitated the courtesan by raising up the Magdalen and by admitting this sinner to the banquet of the divine word; Jesus Christ had called to him the foolish as well as the wise virgins; but, in inaugurating the era of repentance and expiation, he had taught modesty and continence. His apostles and their successors, in order to overthrow the false gods of immodesty, announced to the Christian world that the true God would only communicate with chaste souls and was to be incarnated only in bodies free from soil. At this advanced epoch of civilization, guest-prostitution no longer existed; sacred prostitution, blushing for the first time, was fleeing to its temples, where already a new, more moral and less sensual cult was disputing its province. Paganism, threatened and attacked on all sides, did not even attempt to defend, as one of its favorite forms, that prostitution which the public conscience now looked upon with horror. And so, sacred prostitution ceased to exist, at least openly, even before paganism had wholly abdicated its cult and its temples. The religion of the Gospel had taught its neophytes to respect themselves; chastity and continence were to be, from then on, obligatory virtues for all the world, in place of being, as they had been theretofore, the privilege of a few philosophers; prostitution no longer had excuse or occasion to put

on a religious cloak and hide itself in some obscure corner of the sanctuary. And yet, it had, in the course of so many centuries, infiltrated itself so deeply into religious manners, it had procured so many hidden pleasures for the ministers of its altars, that it still continued to survive, here and there, in the interior of certain convents and endeavored to find a place for itself in the indecent cult of certain saints. It was always Priapus whom an ignorant vulgarian adored under the name of St. Guignolet or of St. Grelichon; it was always, at the beginning of Christianity, sacred prostitution which placed sterile women into direct communication with the phallophoric statues of these happy but disrepectable divinities.

But the noble morality of Christ had illuminated minds, assuaged passions, exalted sentiments and purified hearts. At the beginning of this new faith, one might have believed that prostitution would be effaced in manners as in laws, and that it would not even be necessary to erect legal dams against the impurities of that muddy stream which St. Augustine compares to drains constructed in the most splendid palaces for carrying away miasmic infection and assuring the salubrity of the air. The new society, which had been founded in the midst of the ancient world, and which was conducted at first according to the evangelic rule, made a rude warfare on prostitution, under whatever form it might dare to demand grace; bishops, synods and councils denounced it everywhere to the hatred of the faithful and forced it to take hiding in the shadows in order to escape pecuniary and corporal chastisement. But the wisdom of the Christian legislators had presumed too much on religious authority; they had been in too great haste to repress every impulse of carnal desire; they had not made allowance for instincts, tastes and temperaments; prostitution could not disappear without imperiling the repose and honor of good women. It was, from then on, to retire boldly to its own ignoble domains, and it often braved the law, which only tolerated it with regret, which restrained it within the most narrow boundaries, and which forced it to withdraw far

from the gaze of honest folk. It was still Christianity which opposed to it the most real and respectable barriers. Christianity, by making of marriage an institution of serious morality, and by elevating the condition of woman to an equality with that of the husband, who had taken her for a companion before God and man, condemned prostitution to live outside of society, in mysterious retreats and under the scourge of public censure.

And yet, despite the rigors of the law, which tolerated it, but which threatened and pursued it unceasingly, *Prostitution* led an existence none the less assured and none the less necessary; it had been expelled from the cities, but it found refuge in the suburbs, at the corners of streets, behind hedges and in the open country; it was distinguishable to the people by means of certain colors which were looked upon as infamous, by certain forms of clothing which it alone affected; and so, it carried on its abominable trade; it was a horror to pious and modest persons, but it drew to itself young debauchés, perverse old men and those without any other profession. One might, therefore, say that it had never ceased to be or to lead its own way of life, even when the moral or religious scruples of a king, of a prince or a magistrate, had gone so far as to interdict it entirely, with the object of suppressing it by means of an excessive penalty. Laws which proclaimed its abolition were not slow in being abolished themselves, and this odious social necessity remained constantly attached to the body of the nation, like an incurable ulcer, which medicine can only watch, with the object, where possible, of halting its progress. Such has been the role of *Prostitution* for a number of centuries past, in all the countries in which there is a police at once watchful and intelligent. It is this which one may call legal prostitution; religion protects it, morality denounces it, the law authorizes it.

This legal prostitution includes in its ranks not only those degraded creatures who avow and officially practice their abject profession, but also all those women who, without any official qualification or diploma for abandoning themselves to the pleasures of

a paying public, still make a commerce of their charms, in various degrees and under titles more or less respectable. There are, to tell the truth, two species of legal prostitution: that which has rights and a duly personal authorization; that which has no rights and is merely authorized by the silence of the law respecting it: the one dissimulated and disguised, the other patent and recognized. After this distinction between the two kinds of prostitutes who profit from the benefits of the civil law, one may realize how many different categories are to be found in that contraband prostitution to which the legislator has closed his eyes and which the moralist hesitates to give over to the judgments of that opinion on which it may almost be said to depend. The more prostitution loses its special character of a customary traffic, the further is it removed from that pillar of legal infamy to which its destiny chains it; when it steps beyond the circle, still indefinite, of its own shameful commerce, it withdraws imperceptibly into the vague realms of gallantry and of pleasure. One may see that it is not easy to assign exact and fixed limits to legal prostitution, since one does not know, even, where it begins or where it ends.

But what ought to have been by this time clearly established in the minds of our readers is the enormous distance which separates ancient from modern prostitution. The latter, purely legal, tolerated rather than permitted, under the double censure of religion and morality; the former, on the contrary, equally condemned by philosophy, but consecrated by manners and by religious dogmas. Before the era of Christianity, prostitution was everywhere, under the domestic roof, in the temple and on the street corners; under the rule of the Gospel, it dares no longer show its face except at certain hours of the night, in segregated places and far from the homes of respectable folk. Still later, in order to gain the liberty of appearing in the light of day and of escaping the police of manners, it takes to itself employments, costumes and names which offend neither eyes nor ears, and it makes for itself a mask of decency in order to have the privilege of exercising its trade freely, without control and without sur-

veillance. But always, even when the law is powerless or mute, opinion protests against the hypocritical metamorphoses of legal prostitution.

We have already said enough on this subject to make clear the plan of this work, the fruit of long researches and of studies absolutely new. As for its purpose, we do not believe it would be useful to insist upon making it understood; in the face of such a subject, a writer who respects himself as much as he respects his readers must have for object the making of vice detestable, even when vice presents itself under the most seducing forms. It is enough to render vice hateful to express its sorrowful consequences and the impressive lessons which may be drawn from them. Our work is not a book of austere and cold morality; it is a curious history, full of pictures of nudity which we shall endeavor to veil, especially those which are furnished us in abundance by the Greek and Roman authors. But at all epochs and in all countries, one perceives that the wise teachings of philosophers and legislators have been a protest against the encroachments of sensual passions. Moses inscribed chastity in the code which he gave the Hebrews; Solon and Lycurgus inveighed against prostitution in a country which was the home of voluptuous courtesans; the Roman senate flayed debauchery in the face of the unclean mysteries of Isis and of Venus; Charlemagne, Saint Louis, all the kings who have looked upon themselves as the shepherds of men, in accordance with the beautiful expression of Homer, have labored to purify the manners of their peoples and to confine prostitution to an obscure and abject servitude. This was but the vigilant action of the law. But at the same time, philosophy, in its lessons and its writings, was preaching continence and modesty; Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle and Cicero lent a captivating or persuasive voice to the purest morality. When the Gospel had rehabilitated marriage and chastity had become a religious prescription, Christian philosophy could only repeat the counsels of the pagan philosophers. For eighteen centuries, the pulpit of Jesus Christ thundered and inveighed against the den of prosti-

tution. On the one hand, mire and darkness; on the other, a holy stream in which hearts were washed free of stain, a vivifying light which comes from God.

This book is divided into four parts, the total of which will present the complete history of prostitution in ancient and modern times, as well as among all peoples.

In the first part, we shall view prostitution under its three particular forms, following the laws of hospitality, of religion and of the state; this part includes only Greek and Roman antiquity. The sources and the materials are so abundant and so rich for this first part that it alone, if one were to treat of all the developments, might be extended to embrace a number of volumes. The Letters of Alciphron, the *Deipnosophistes* of Athens and the Dialogues of Lucian cause us to regret the loss of those other historical treatises which Gorgias, Ammonius Antiphanes, Appodorus, Aristophanes and other Greek writers compiled on the life and manners of courtezans or hetairai. Meursius, Musonius and a number of modern scholars, among others, Professor Jacobs of Gotha, have regarded this subject as not unworthy of their grave dissertations. Ancient Rome has left us no book devoted especially to the subject, with which, however, it was not unfamiliar; but the Latin authors, principally the poets, provide us with more material than we are able to make use of. Moreover, a number of savants with names ending in *us*, like Laurentius, Choveronius, etc., have compiled dissertations on the hidden phases of Roman prostitution. We have so little to say about prostitution among the Egyptians, among the Jews and the Babylonians, that we have had no scruple about attaching to the section dealing with Greek antiquities the chapters which we have consecrated to these ancient peoples, although among the peoples mentioned guest-prostitution left profound traces.

The second part of our work, the most considerable and the most interesting of the four, is devoted entirely to France. Here we shall follow step by step, province by province, city by city, the history of prostitution from the Gauls to our own day. We

shall encounter a number of traces, barely recognizable, of sacred prostitution; but it is legal prostitution which, in this part of the work, will be disengaged from the history of jurisprudence, of the police, of religion and of manners. This subject, one of a high degree of morality, has never been treated except for the contemporary period; Parent-Duchatelet, who was an observer and not a historian and archeologist, has only viewed and judged prostitution from the point of view of public administration, hygiene and statistics. Works of the same *genre* as his, published by A. Beraud and by Sabatier, present us with a few historical facts beyond those contained in the voluminous treatise, *de la Prostitution dans la ville de Paris*, but they have little importance, except from the point of view of legislation. The history of manners and their varied aspects is yet to be done; and in our attempt, we have drawn fragment after fragment from the historians, the chroniclers, the poets and all authors who have registered in passing a fact, a detail or an observation relative to a subject so vast and so complex as that which we are here approaching for the first time. A few pages of the *Traité de la Police* of *De la Marre* and of the *Repertoire de Jurisprudence* of Merlin; passages in the Encyclopedias and similar collections: that is all that exists upon the subject, prior to the learned monograph which M. Rabautaux has just published as an appendix to the great work entitled *Le Moyen Age et la Renaissance*. M. Rabautaux has limited his erudite labors to what he calls the *service des moeurs*. We shall add the history of prostitution in France and a picture, mitigated to some degree, of its exterior characteristics and its secret cults, after the most authentic documents. We shall penetrate, the torch of science in our hand, the hutches of the *rue Baillehoé* or the *rue Huleu*; we shall be introduced, by the erotics of the eighteenth century, into the *petites maisons* of the *impures*; we shall slip into the royal groves of the *Parc-aux-Cerfs*; we shall descend, hiding our faces as we do so, into the infected holes of the *Palais-Royal*; and always and everywhere, we shall write upon the wall, in letters of fire, this inscription, more

intelligible than the one which was written up at the feast of Belshazzar: *Without manners, there is neither God, nor country, nor repose, nor happiness.*

The third part of this work is reserved for the history of prostitution in the rest of Europe. Italy, Spain, England, Germany, etc., shall bring in turn their contingent of singular facts for this gallery of manners, which we shall see change in accordance with the time and country. The materials for this part of our work are widely dispersed, like those concerning France, and have never been collected, with the exception of a very remarkable treatise called forth by the monstrous features of prostitution in London. Its author, Ryan, is only concerned with what he has seen, and the history of the past is not even visible to him. Spain, with its *Celestine*, makes us acquainted with that learned and refined prostitution which it has learned certainly from the bitter experience of Italy. It is to Italy, the brilliant *gynaeceum* of courtezans and ruffians, that we shall have to turn for the origin of that terrible plague of love, which the Italians of the sixteenth century had the effrontery to name *mal francais*,\* as if Charles the Eighth had not gone to contract it at Naples. We shall make it a point not to forget Laponia which is the sole place in Europe where guest-prostitution is still practiced today.

Finally, the fourth part of this history, frequently a sorrowful and heart-breaking one, shall take us into all the countries outside of Europe: to Asia, to Africa, to America, and we shall meet everywhere, in civilized India as among the savages of the South Sea, the three principal forms of prostitution: hospitable, sacred and legal. This last form will show itself more rarely than the other two before modern civilization has passed its spirit-level over the religious and domestic manners of the four parts of the world. The religions of India, the hospitality of Otaïti, the legislation concerning *filles publiques* in the United States, will give rise to contrasts which the distance of time and place will only render the more interesting for the observer. We shall search in

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\*The syphilis: called by the Italians *mal francioso*.

vain for a people who have not accepted, as a necessary scourge, the leprosy of prostitution.

The reading of our work,\* we persist in declaring in advance, will be a grave lesson and of real utility. One will learn from it, above all, to thank Providence for permitting us to live in an epoch in which prostitution is being effaced from our manners, and in which sentiments of honor and of virtue are being born of themselves in our hearts. One must have seen what prostitution was like among our fathers in order to judge of the social ameliorations which every day brings and of which the future is yet to feel the benefits. Prostitution is a public malady: to describe symptoms and to study causes is to prepare the remedy.

F.S. Pierre DUFOUR.

15th. April, 1851, from my hermitage at Saint-Claude.

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\*LaCroix apparently does not carry out the original plan of his work. As it stands, the *Histoire* is divided into three parts, the fourth being missing.



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# History of Prostitution

PART ONE

Antiquity  
Greece and Rome

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## CHAPTER FIRST

IT IS in Chaldea, the ancient cradle of human societies, that one must look for the first traces of Prostitution. A part of Chaldea, that which touches Mesopotamia on the north and which includes the land of Ur, the country of Abraham, had for inhabitants a war-like and savage race, living amid mountains and knowing no other art than that of the chase. These huntsman folk were the inventors of hospitality and of Prostitution which was, in some sort, the naive and brutal expression of the former. In the other part of Chaldea, which was bounded by the Arabian desert and which extended in fertile plains and rich pastures, a pastoral people of gentle and pacific nature led a wandering life amid their innumerable herds. They observed the stars, they created the sciences, they invented religions, and, with them, sacred Prostitution. When Nimrod, the conquering king whom the Bible calls a great hunter before God, reunited under his laws the two provinces and the two peoples of Chaldea, when he founded Babylon on the banks of the Euphrates in the year of the world 1402, according to the books of Moses, he permitted a mixture of beliefs, ideas, and manners among the different races who were his subjects, and he did not even direct the fusion, which occurred leisurely under the influence of custom. And so, sacred Prostitution and guest Prostitution soon came to signify but one and the same thing in the minds of the Babylonians, and they became simultaneously one of the most characteristic forms of the cult of Venus or Mylitta.

Here Herodotus, the venerable father of history and the most ancient collector of the traditions of the world: "The Babylonians have a very shameful law: every woman born in the land is obliged, once in her life, to repair to the Temple of Venus to give herself to a stranger. A number among them,

proud of their riches and disdaining to be confused with the others, have themselves brought to the temple in covered chariots. There they remain seated, with, behind them, a great number of domestics who have accompanied them; but most of the others take their seats in the piece of land adjoining the Temple of Venus with a crown of fig-leaves about the head. Some come and some go. One sees alleys separated by ropes which have been stretched; the strangers walk up and down in these alleys and choose the women who please them the most. When a woman has taken her place in this line, she is not permitted to return home until some stranger has cast silver upon her knees and has had intercourse with her outside the sacred place. It is required that the stranger, in casting the silver, say to her: ‘I invoke the goddess Mylitta.’ Now the Assyrians give to Venus the name of Mylitta. However modest the sum, it cannot be refused: the law forbids it, for this silver becomes sacred. She follows the first one who tosses her silver, and it is not permitted her to repulse anyone. Finally, when she has been acquitted of what she owed the goddess, by abandoning herself to a stranger, she returns home; after that, whatever sum anyone gives her it is not possible to seduce her. Those who have an elegant figure and beauty do not remain long in the temple, but the ugly ones remain there because they are not able to satisfy the law. There are even some who remain there three or four years.” (Book I, paragraph i 99.)

This sacred Prostitution, identified with the cult of Mylitta or Venus Uranios in the island of Cyprus and in Phoenicia, is one of the facts of history, however monstrous, bizarre, and unlikely it may appear. The prophet Baruch, whom Herodotus had not consulted and who lamented with Jeremiah two centuries before the Greek historian, tells of the same turpitutes in the letter of Jeremiah to the Jews whom the king Nebuchadnezzar had led in captivity to Babylon: “Women, wrapped in ropes, take their seats along the roads and burn perfumes (*succendentes ossa olivarum*). When one of them, selected by some passerby, has

slept with him, she reproaches her neighbor with not having been adjudged worthy, like herself, of being possessed by the man and with not yet having broken her cincture of cords." (Baruch, Chapter VI.)

This cincture of cords, these knots, which bound the body of the woman vowed to Venus, represented the modesty which held her back by a fragile bond and which the impetuosity of love was soon to break. It was necessary then, that one who wanted to cohabit with one of these consecrated women should seize the extremity of the cord which bound her and so draw his conquest under the cedars which lent their shade to the consummation of the mystery. The sacrifice to Venus was better received by the goddess when the one who offered it, in his amorous transports, broke all the bonds which were in the way. But the savants who have commentated this famous passage of Baruch are not in agreement as to the kind of offering which the consecrated ones burned in front of them in order to win the favor of Venus. According to some, it was a cake of cheese; according to others, it was a philtre which inflamed the desires and prepared for pleasure; finally, in accordance with a more natural explanation, it was nothing more than fays perfumed with incense.

Herodotus had seen with his own eyes, about the year 440 B.C., sacred Prostitution among the women of Babylon; as a stranger, no doubt, he had cast silver on the knees of some beautiful Babylonian. Three centuries and a half after him, another traveler, Strabo, also bore witness to these disorderly practices, and he tells us that all the women of Babylon obeyed the oracle by giving their bodies to a stranger whom they looked upon as a guest: *Mos est. . . . cum hospite corpus miscere*, says the Latin translation of his Geography, written in Greek. This Prostitution never took place except in a single temple in which it had been installed from the early times of the foundation of Babylon. The Temple of Mylitta had been too small to hold all the adorers of the goddess; but there was about this temple a vast *enciente* which was part of it and which enclosed the *edicules*, the *boscages*, the

basins and the gardens. This was the field of Prostitution. The women who abandoned themselves were here upon sacred ground where the eye of a father or a husband could not come to trouble them. Herodotus and Strabo do not speak of the part which the priest reserved for himself in these offerings of the pious followers of Mylitta; but Baruch pictures the priests of Babylon for us as the sort who would refuse nothing.

One understands how the constant spectacle of sacred Prostitution must have corrupted the manners of Babylon. In short, this immense city, peopled with several million men spread over a space of fifteen leagues, soon became a place of frightful debauchery. It was destroyed in part by the Persians, who captured it in the year 331 B.C.; but the ruin of many great edifices, the sacking of the palace and the tombs, and the destruction of the walls, were not enough to purify the air from the plague of Prostitution, which perpetuated itself here as in its true Fatherland, so long as there was a roof to shelter it. Alexander the Great himself had been terrified by Babylonian debauchery when he went there to take part in it and to die. "There is none other more corrupt than this people," reports Quintus Curtius, one of the historians of the conqueror of Babylon, "or none other more learned in the art of pleasure and of volup tuaries. Fathers and mothers suffered their daughters to prostitute themselves to their guests for silver, and husbands were not less indulgent with respect to their wives. The Babylonians plunged into drunkenness and all the disorders which follow it. The women appeared at their banquets with modesty at first; but they ended by abandoning their robes, then the rest of their garments one after another, disrobing themselves little by little of modesty until they were entirely naked. And these were not public women who abandoned themselves so; they were the most respectable matrons and their daughters."

The example of Babylon had borne fruit, and the cult of Mylitta had been propagated, with the Prostitution which accompanied it, in Asia and in Africa, even to the interior of Egypt as of

Persia; but in each of these countries the goddess took a new name and her cult affected new forms, under which there always reappeared sacred Prostitution.

In Armenia, they adored Venus under the name of Anaitis; they had erected a temple to her like the one which Mylitta had at Babylon. About this temple there extended a vast domain enclosed in which there lived a population consecrated to the rites of the goddess. Strangers alone had the right to pass the threshold of this species of seraglio of the two sexes and to demand a gallant hospitality which was never refused them. Whoever was admitted into this amorous city must, in accordance with antique usage, purchase by means of a present the favors which were to be shown him; but as there is no custom which does not fall sooner or later into desuetude in a period of decadence, the woman whom the guest of Venus had honored with his caresses forced him often to accept a more considerable gift than the one which she had received from him. Those in this sacred enclosure were the sons and the daughters of the best families of the country; and they entered the service of the goddess for a longer or a shorter period of time in accordance with the vow of their parents. When the daughters came forth from the temple of Anaitis, leaving behind them on its altars all they had gained by the sweat of their bodies, they had no cause to blush at the trade they had taken for their own, nor did they lack for husbands, who went to the temple to receive information about the religious antecedents of the young priestesses. Those who had received the greatest number of strangers were the most sought after in marriage. It should be remarked also that in the cult of Anaitis there was so far as possible a division according to age, face, and condition of the lovers, in such a manner as to content the goddess and her adorers. It is Strabo who has preserved for us this consoling feature, which we shall not meet with among the other Venuses.

These different Venuses were spread throughout all Syria, and they had everywhere established their Prostitution with certain variations of ceremonial. Venus, under her diverse names, per-

sonified and deified the organ of the woman, the feminine conception, the female nature. It was, therefore, quite simple to deify and to personify also the organ of the man, the masculine act of generation, the male nature. The men had instituted the cult of Venus; the women instituted that of Adonis, which became as it materialized that of Priapus. One sees in antiquity these two cults reigning one beside the other. It is above all to the Phoenicians that one must attribute the propagation of these cults, which often form but a single one, one being mingled with the other. The Venus of the Phoenicians was called Astarte; she had temples at Tyre, Sidon, and in the principal cities of Phoenicia; but the most celebrated were those of Heliopolis in Syria and of the region near Mount Lebanon. Astarte in her statues had two sexes, representing at once Venus and Adonis. This mixture of the two sexes was translated into a travesty of women by the men and of men by the women in the nocturnal fetes of the goddess. The most infamous debauches took place under cover of these disguises. And the priest himself directed the ceremony to the sound of musical instruments, of drums and tambours. This monstrous promiscuity which took place under the auspices of the *good goddess*, led to a multitude of children who never knew their fathers and who came in their turn from their most tender years to find their mothers again in the mysteries of Astarte. There was, however, in all this a species of marriage, beyond sacred Prostitution, to which men as well as women lent themselves; the Phoenicians, according to the testimony of Eusebius, prostituted their virgin daughters to strangers, to the greater glory of hospitality. These turpitudes, which are not to be absolved on the ground of their antiquity, continued to the fourth century of the vulgar era, and it was necessary for Constantine the Great to take them in hand, interdicting them by law, destroying the temples of Astarte, and replacing with a Christian church the one which dishonored Heliopolis.

This Astarte, whom the Bible calls the *goddess of the Sidonians*, found altars not less impure in the Island of Cyprus, where

the Phoenicians of Ascalon early imported sacred Prostitution along with their commerce and industry. It was said that Venus, born of the sea, like the brilliant planet, Urania, whom the Chaldean burghers beheld on fine summer nights, had chosen for her terrestrial empire this Island of Cyprus, and that the gods, at her birth, had assigned her this as her share, as we learn from the Greek tradition through the mouth of Homer. This was the Astarte of the Phoenicians, the Urania of the Babylonians: she had in her island twenty renowned temples; the two principal ones were those of Paphos and of Amathonte, where sacred Prostitution was practiced on a greater scale than anywhere else. And yet, the daughters of Amathonte had been chaste, and even obstinate in their chastity, when Venus was cast up on their shores by the spume of the waves; they despised this new goddess who appeared to them quite naked, these poor Propoetides, and the irritated goddess then ordered them to prostitute themselves to every comer to expiate the bad reception which they had given her: they obeyed with so much repugnance the orders of Venus that the protectress of loves changed them into stones. This was a lesson from which the daughters of Cyprus profited; they vowed themselves from then on to Prostitution in honor of their goddess, and they would walk of any evening by the shores of the sea to sell themselves to strangers who arrived at the island. This was so in the second century at the time of Justinian, who tells us of these promenades of the young maidens of Cyprus upon the sea-shore. But at this period, the product of their Prostitution was not deposited, as it had been in the beginning, upon the altar of their goddess; this disrespectful salary was put into a coffer to form the dot which they were to bring their husbands and which the latter received unblushingly.

As to the fetes of Venus, which attracted to Cyprus an innumerable throng of zealous worshipers, they were no less accompanied by the acts and emblems of Prostitution. To King Cinyras is commonly attributed the foundation of the temple of Paphos, and the priests of the place pretended that the mistress of this

king, named Cypris, had won such a reputation for cleverness in the things of love that the goddess had wanted to give him his name. This Venus who was adored at Paphos was, then, the image of the female nature, the same as Mylitta of Babylon; also, in the sacrifices which were offered to her, there was presented, under the name of *Carposis*, which signified *premices*, a phallus or a piece of money. The initiated did not confine themselves to allegory. The goddess was represented at first by a comb or pyramid of white stone, which was later transformed into the statue of a woman. The statue of the temple of Amathonte, on the contrary, represented a bearded woman with the attributes of a man under her feminine clothes; this Venus was a Hermaphrodite, according to Macrobius (*putant eamdem marem ac deminam esse*); that is why Catullus invokes her by calling her *the double goddess* of Amathonte (*duplex Amathusia*). The most secret mysteries of this Astarte took place in the secret wood which surrounded her temple, and in this wood, which was always green, might be heard the sigh of the *iunx*, or *frutilla*, the bird dedicated to the goddess. This bird, the flesh of which was employed by magicians in making their amorous philtres, was none other than our own trivial *hocqueue*; if it came to us from Cyprus, it has had time to undergo a change on the way. This fortunate island had yet other temples in which the cult of Venus followed the same rite: at Cinyria, at Tamasus, at Aphrodisium, and above all at Idalie, sacred Prostitution found the same pretext if not the same forms.

From Cyprus, it conquered in succession all the islands of the Mediterranean; it made its way into Greece and into Italy; the marine commerce of the Phoenicians carried it everywhere they were able to seek or unload merchandise. But each people, in accepting a cult which caressed its passions, added to this cult certain traits drawn from its own manners and character. In the Phoenician colonies sacred Prostitution preserved the customs based upon lucre and mercantilism which distinguished this race of merchants; at Sica-Veneria, in the territory of Carthage, the

temple of Venus, which in the language of Tyre was called *Succoth Benoth*, or the *Tents of Young Girls*, was, in effect, an asylum for Prostitution, to which the daughters of the country went to gain their dot by the pain of their body (*inuria corporis*, says Valerius Maximus); they were all the more respectable as women after having plied this vile trade, and they married all the better for it. One may deduce from certain passages in the Bible that this temple, like those of Astarte at Sidon and Ascalon, was wholly surrounded by small tents, in which the young Carthaginian maidens consecrated themselves to the Phoenician Venus. They came there from all sides in such great numbers that they were in each other's way and were not able to return to Carthage as quickly as they should have liked in order to find husbands. The temples of Venus were situated ordinarily in high places, commanding a view of the sea so that mariners, tired from long voyages, might see from afar, like a Pharos, the white abode of the goddess, which promised them repose and pleasure. It is easy to understand that guest-prostitution was first established for the benefit of mariners along the coasts which they frequented. This Prostitution became sacred when the priest willed to have his part in it and to cover it, in a manner, with the veil of the goddess who protected it. Saint Augustine, in his City of God, has set forth precisely the principal characteristics of the cult of Venus by maintaining that there were three Venuses rather than one: that of the virgins; that of the married women; and that of the courtezans; such was this immodest goddess to whom the Phoenicians, he tells us, immolated the modesty of their daughters before marriage.

All Asia Minor embraced with transport a cult which deified the senses and the carnal appetites, the cult which often associated Adonis and Venus. Adonis, to whom the Hebrews gave the name of God, creator of the world (*adonai*), personified the male nature without which the female nature is powerless. In the same manner, in the funereal fetes which were celebrated in honor of a hero of the chase, slain by an enemy and wept by

Venus, his divine lover, was symbolized the exhaustion of the physical and material forces as the result of abuse, which are only to be revived after a period of absolute rest. During these fetes, which were greatly celebrated at Byblos in Syria, and which assembled an immense and cosmopolitan population about the temple of Venus, the women consecrated their hair or their modesty to the goddess. Hence came the fete of sorrow, in the course of which one wept for Adonis, one striking another with his hand or with wands; this was followed by the fete of joy, which announced the resurrection of Adonis; then there was exposed in the open air, in the portico of the temple, the phallic statue of the resuscitated god; and at once, every woman present was obliged to surrender her locks to the razor or her body to Prostitution. Those who preferred to keep their hair were parked in a sort of market which only strangers had the privilege of entering; they remained there *for sale*, as Lucian says, for a whole day, and they abandoned themselves to this shameful traffic as often as anyone was willing to pay them. All the silver which came from this laborious day was employed afterwards in making sacrifices to Venus; it was thus that the loves of the goddess and Adonis were solemnized. One may be astonished that the inhabitants of a land should be so surrendered to a cult in which their women had all the benefits of the mysteries of Venus; but it must be remarked that strangers were no less interested than women in these mysteries which seemed to be instituted expressly for them. The cult of Venus was, then, in a way, a sedative for the women, a nomadic experience for the men, since the latter could visit in turn the various fetes and temples of the goddess, profiting everywhere in these voluptuous pilgrimages, from the advantages reserved for guests and strangers.

Everywhere, in short, in Asia Minor, there were temples of Venus, and sacred Prostitution everywhere presided at the fetes of the goddess, whether she took the name of Mylitta, Anaitis, Astarte, Urania, Mithra, or some other symbolic name. There

were in the Hellespont, at Zela and at Comanes, two temples of Venusanaitis which drew to their solemnities a multitude of fervent worshipers. These temples were prodigiously enriched with the silver of these debauchees, who came from all regions to accomplish their vows (*causa votorum*, says Strabo). During the fetes, the approaches to the temple at Comanes resembled a vast field, peopled with men of all nations, presenting a bizarre mixture of languages and costumes. The women who consecrated themselves to the goddess and who made silver of their bodies (*corpore quaestum facientes*) were as numerous as at Corinth, Strabo, who had been a witness of this affluence, tells us elsewhere. It was the same at Susa and at Ecbatana in Media; among the Parthians, who were the pupils and imitators of the Persians in the matter of sensuality and lust; even among the Amazons, who abandoned their ordinary chastity by introducing strange disorders into the cult of their Venus, whom they, nevertheless, named Artemis, the Chaste. But it was in Lydia that sacred Prostitution entered the most deeply into matters. These Lydians, who boasted of having invented all the games of chance, and who gave themselves to such pursuits with a sort of fury, lived in a state of ease which was an eternal incentive to debauch. To them every pleasure was good, without need of any religious pretext or the occasion of a sacred fete. They were glad enough to adore Venus, with all the impurities which had found their way into her cult, but, beyond this, their daughters vowed themselves to Venus and practiced on their own account the most shocking Prostitution: "They gain their dot," says Herodotus, "and then continue this commerce even after they are married." This dot so dishonorably acquired gave them the right to choose a husband who did not always have the right to refuse the honor of such a choice. It appears the Lydian girls did not do a bad business, for when there came question of erecting a tomb to their King, Alyattes, father of Crœsus, they contributed to the expense, along with the merchants and artizans of Lydia. This tomb was magnificent, and the commemorative inscriptions indicated the part

which each of the three trades bore in its construction; the courtezans had furnished a considerable sum and had built a portion of a monument a good deal more extended than those built with the contributions of the artizans and the merchants.

The Lydians, having been subjugated by the Persians, communicated to their conquerors the poison of Prostitution. The Lydians, who had in their armies a throng of female dancers and musicians, marvelously drilled in the art of voluptuousness, taught the Persians to make use of those women who played the lyre, the tambour, the flute, and the psaltery. Music became then the adjunct of debauchery, and there was no great banquet at which drunkenness and debauchery were not stimulated by the sound of instruments and by the obscene songs and lascivious dances of courtezans. This shameful spectacle, these preludes to an unbridled orgy, were carried on by the ancient Persians even in the sight of their legitimate wives and daughters, who came to take their place at the festival, without veils and crowned with flowers, they who ordinarily lived shut up in the interior of their houses and never left without veils, even to go to the temple of Mithra, the Venus of the Persians. Heated by wine, animated by music, exalted by the voluptuous pantomime of the musicians, these virgins, these matrons, these wives soon lost all restraint, and accepted, exchanged, and provoked, the most dishonorable advances in the presence of their fathers, their husbands, their brothers and their children. Ages, sexes, and ranks were confounded under the sway of a general vertigo; songs, cries, and dances redoubled in intensity, and modesty, whose eyes and ears were no longer respected, fled wrapping herself in the folds of her robe. A horrible promiscuity followed this debauchery in the festival hall and became an infamous *dicterion*. The banquet and its libidinous accompaniments was prolonged till the dawn made the torches grow pale and the seminude guests fell pell-mell to sleep on couches of silver and ivory. Such is the story which Macrobius and Athenæus give us of these libidinous festivals, which Plutarch endeavors to rehabilitate by asserting that the

Persians were a little too much given to imitation of the Parthians, who abandoned themselves with fury to all the entertainments of wine and music.

For the rest, from the earliest antiquity, the kings of Persia had thousands of musical concubines attached to their suites; and Parmenion, the general of Alexander of Macedonia, found in the train of Darius three hundred twenty-nine who had remained there after the defeat of Arbela, with two hundred seventy-seven cooks, forty-six plaiters of crowns and forty perfumers as the last debris of his luxury and power.



## CHAPTER II.

EGYPT, despite its sages, despite its priests who taught it morality, was, nevertheless, not exempt from the scourge of Prostitution; she was too near the Phoenicians and had too many trade relations with them not to adopt something of a religion which came, like purple and incense, from Tyre and Sidon. She left the dogma, taking only the cult, and while Venus had no altars under her own name in the empire of Isis and Osiris, Prostitution, from the most remote times, reigned almost publicly in her cities, even more than in the sanctuaries of her temples. This was not guest-Prostitution: the domestic fireside of the Egyptians remained always inaccessible to strangers, on account of the horror which the latter inspired; this was not sacred-Prostitution, for, in giving themselves for such a purpose, her women were not accomplishing an act of religion: this was legal Prostitution in all its primitive naïveté. The laws authorized, protected and even justified the exercise of this infamous commerce; a woman sold herself as if she had been a piece of merchandise, and the man who bought her for a fixed price excused, or at least did not blame, the odious traffic which she accepted only out of avarice. The Egyptian woman showed herself as eager for money as the Phoenician, but she did not take the trouble to conceal her cupidity under the appearances of a religious practice. She also was of a very ardent nature, as if the fires of her Ethiopian sun had passed into her senses; she possessed above all, if we are to believe Ctesias, whose testimony Athenaeus invokes, incomparable qualities and talents for exciting, inflaming and satisfying the passions which were directed toward her; but all this was but a means of gain. Then, too, the courtezans of Egypt had a reputation which they were forced to maintain throughout the entire world.

The Egyptian religion, like all the religions of antiquity, had deified fecund and generative nature under the names of Osiris and Isis. These were, in the beginning, the sole divinities of Egypt: Osiris or the Sun represented the principle of male life; Isis or the Earth the principle of female life. Apuleius, who had been initiated into the mysteries of the goddess, makes her speak in this language: "I am Nature, mother of all things, sovereign of all the elements, the beginning of centuries, the first of divinities, the queen of shades, the most ancient inhabitant of the heavens, the uniform image of gods and of goddesses. . . . I am the sole divinity revered in the universe under numerous forms, with diverse ceremonies and under different names. The Phoenicians call me the Mother of the gods; the Cyprians call me Venus of Paphos. . . ." Isis was, then, but another Venus, and her mysterious cult recalled, through a throng of allegories, the role which woman or the female nature plays in the universe. As to Osiris, her husband, what was he but the emblem of the man or the male nature, who has need of intercourse with the female nature, which he fecundates in order to engender and create? The bull and the cow were, then, the symbols of Isis and Osiris. The priests of the goddess bore in her ceremonies the mysterious van which received grain and bran, but which kept only the first, rejecting the second; the priests of the god bore the sacred bull, or the key which opens the most firmly closed locks. This bull represented the organ of the man; the van the organ of the woman. There was also the eye, with or without brows, which was placed beside the bull among the attributes of Osiris, in order to simulate the attraction of the two sexes. In the same way, in the processions of Isis, immediately after the nursing cow, came consecrated young girls, called *Cistophores* holding the mystic cist, a basket of rushes containing round or oval cakes with a hole in the middle; after these *Cistophores* came a priestess hiding in her breast a little golden urn, containing the phallus which was, according to Apuleius, "the adorable image of the supreme divinity and the instrument of the most secret mysteries." This phal-

lus, which reappeared incessantly and under all forms in the Egyptian cult, was a figurative representation of a part of the body of Osiris, the part which Isis had not been able to find when she conjugally reassembled the scattered members of her husband, who had been slain and mutilated by the odious Typhon, the victim's brother. One might, then, judge of the cult of Isis and Osiris by these objects which were its mysterious symbols. It was inevitable that Prostitution in such a cult should be very widely extended; but it was certainly, at least in the first stages, reserved to the priest, who found in it one of the most productive sources of revenue for his order. It reigned without shame in these initiations, to which the necessary prelude was ablutions, repose and continence. The god and the goddess had transferred their full powers to these ministers, who employed them quite materially, and who were charged with initiating into these infamous debauches the neophytes of both sexes. Saint Epiphany says positively that these occult ceremonies contained an allusion to the manners of men before the establishment of society. There was to be found in them, accordingly, a promiscuity of the sexes and all the irruptions of the grossest libertinism. Herodotus tells us of the preparations which were made for the fetes of Isis, adored in the city of Bubastis under the name of Diana: "They all take to the water, he says, men and women, in pell-mell confusion; in each boat there is a great number of persons of one and the other sex. While they are sailing, some of the women play castanets and some of the men the flute; the rest, men and women, sing and beat their hands. When they approach a city, they draw up the boat to the bank. Of the women, some continue to play their castanets while others cry out, with all their might, insults to the women of the city; these latter begin to dance and the former, remaining upright, indecently draw up their robes." These obscenities were but a replica of those which were to take place in the neighborhood of the temple, where each year seven hundred thousand pilgrims came to give themselves over to unbelievable excesses.

The horrible disorders to which the cult of Isis gave rise found a hiding-place in the subterranean vaults, which the initiate was not permitted to enter until after a time of tests and purification. Herodotus, the confidant to whom the priests of Egypt had revealed the nature of this Prostitution, says enough about it to enable us to divine from his reticences what he does not say: "The Egyptians are the first who, by a principle of religion, forbade one to have commerce with women in the sacred places, or even to enter these places after having had such commerce, without first having been washed clean. Almost all the other peoples, if one excepts the Egyptians and the Greeks, have commerce in the sacred places, or at least, they afterward enter these places without being washed. The Egyptians imagine that men are like other animals. One sees, they say, the beasts of the different species of birds copulating in the temples and in the other places consecrated to the gods; and if this action were disagreeable to the divinity, even the beasts would not commit it." Herodotus, who does not approve these reasons, abstains from betraying the secrets of the Egyptian priests, in whose confidence he had lived at Memphis, at Heliopolis and at Thebes. He makes us acquainted only indirectly with the public and private manners of Egypt; but from certain details which he gives in passing, one may judge that, among that ancient people, corruption had reached a climax. It was also the practice not to give the embalmers the bodies of young and beautiful women until three or four days after their death, and the reason for this was the fear that the embalmers might abuse the corpses. "There is a tale," says Herodotus, "that one was caught in the act with a woman who was recently dead."

The history of the kings of Egypt presents us also, in the works of Herodotus, with two strange examples of legal Prostitution. Rhampsinitus or Rameses, who reigned about 2244 B.C., wishing to discover the adroit thief who had pillaged his treasury, "resorted to a thing which to me was unbelievable," says Herodotus whose credulity had often enough been put to the test: "he

prostituted his own daughter, ordering her to seat herself in a place of debauch and then to receive equally all the men who presented themselves to her, but to oblige them, before according them her favors, to tell her what they had done in their life that was most subtle and most wicked.” The thief cut off the arm of a dead man, placed it under his cloak, and went to pay a visit to the king’s daughter. He did not fail to boast of being the perpetrator of the theft; the princess attempted to have him arrested, but, as they were in obscurity, she seized only the arm of the dead man while the live one reached the door. This new and clever trick so commended him to the esteem of Rhampsinitus that the king pardoned the thief and ended by marrying him to the one whose acquaintance the robber had made in an evil place. This poor princess, no doubt, came out of the affair in a better state than the daughter of Cheops, who was king of Egypt twelve centuries before Christ. Cheops caused to be constructed the great pyramid, which cost twenty years of labor and an incalculable outlay of money. “Drained by these expenses,” reports Herodotus, “he came to such a point of infamy as to prostitute his own daughter in a place of debauchery and to order her to exact of her lovers a certain sum of silver. I do not know what was the amount of this sum; the priests did not tell me. She not only executed the orders of her father, but she also wanted to leave a monument for herself; and so, she besought each one who came to see her to present her with a stone for the work which she contemplated. It was with these stones, the priests told me, that they built the pyramid which is the center of the three.” Modern science has not yet calculated how many stones it took to build that pyramid.

The erection of a pyramid, however costly it may have been, seems not to have been beyond the means of a courtezan. And so, despite chronology and history, the construction of the pyramid of Mycerinus is generally attributed to the courtezan Rhodopis. This courtezan was not Egyptian by birth, but she had made her fortune with the Egyptians a long time after the reign

of Mycerinus. Rhodopis, who lived under Amasis, 600 B.C., was originally of Thrace; she had been the companion in slavery of Aesop, the fabulist, in the house of Iadmon at Samos. She was brought to Egypt by Xanthus of Samos, who plied at her expense a trade that was vile enough, having purchased her so that she might follow the profession of courtezan for her master's profit. She succeeded marvelously, and her renown drew to her a throng of lovers, among whom Charaxus of Mitylene, brother of the celebrated Sappho, was so taken with this charming girl that he gave a considerable sum for her ransom. Rhodopis, becoming free, did not quit Egypt, where her beauty and her talents had procured her immense riches. She made a singular use of these riches, employing the tenth part of her property in the making of iron brooches, which she offered, for some unknown vow, to the temple of Delphi, where they were still to be seen in the time of Herodotus. This grave historian speaks of these symbolic brooches as a thing which no one had yet imagined, and he does not seek to divine the figurative sense of this singular offering. In the time of Plutarch, nothing more than the place was pointed out. Popular tradition had so confounded the brooches in the temple of the Delphic Apollo and the pyramid of Mycerinus, constructed a number of centuries before the brooches were made, that everyone in Egypt obstinately insisted in assigning that pyramid to Rhodopis. According to some, she had paid the cost; according to others (Strabo and Diodorus of Sicily seem to have adopted this erroneous opinion), her lovers had built it at their mutual expense for her pleasure: from which one must conclude, the courtezan had a love for pyramids.

Rhodopis, whom the Greeks call Dorica (and Dorica was celebrated throughout all Greece) headed the list of her adorers with the name of Aesop, who, all deformed and ugly as he was, had only to give one of his fables in order to win the favor of this beautiful daughter of Thrace. The kiss of the poet marked her out for the complacent regard of destiny. The handsome Charaxus, to whom she owed her liberty and the beginning of her

opulence, had permitted her to settle in the city of Naucratis, where he came to see her on each voyage which he made to Egypt to bring and sell wine. Rhodopis loved him well enough to be faithful to him so long as he sojourned at Naucratis, and love detained him there more than commerce. During one of his absences, Rhodopis, seated on a terrace, was regarding the Nile and searching the horizon for the sail of the ship which was to bring back Charaxus; one of her slippers had dropped from her impatient foot and was shining on the rug; an eagle saw it, seized it with his beak and carried it away into the air. At this moment, King Amasis was at Naucratis and holding his court there, surrounded by his principal officers. The eagle which had carried off the slipper of Rhodopis without her perceiving it, let it drop on the knees of Pharaoh. He had never seen a slipper so small and so comely. He at once started a search for the pretty foot to which it belonged, and when he had found it, after having tried the divine slipper on the feet of all the women of his States, nothing would do but he must have Rhodopis for a mistress.\* Nevertheless, the mistress of Amasis would not renounce Charaxus; and Greece celebrated, in the songs of its poets, the loves of Dorica, whom Sappho, Charaxus' sister, had pursued with bitter reproaches. Pausidippus, in his book on Ethiopia, devotes this epigram to the sweetheart of Charaxus: "A bow of ribbons bound your long tresses, voluptuous scents exhaled from your flowing robes; vermillion-colored as the wine which smiles in the chalices, you enlace in your charming arms the handsome Charaxus. The verses of Sappho bear witness to you and assure you of immortality. Naucratis shall preserve the memory of you so long as boats sail with joy on the waves of the majestic Nile."

Naucratis was a city of courtezans; and those who came out of this city appeared to have profited from the lessons of Rhodopis. Their charms and their seductions were for a long time the talk of Greece, which often sent her debauchees to Naucratis, and these brought back marvelous tales of Prostitution. After Rho-

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\*Obviously, the Cinderella legend.

dopis, another courtezan named Archidice also acquired much celebrity by the same means; but, according to Herodotus, she enjoyed a less vogue than her predecessor. It is known, however, that she placed so high a price on her favors that the richest was ruined in paying that price; and there were many who were so ruined. A certain young Egyptian, who was hopelessly in love with this courtezan, wanted to ruin himself for her; but, as his fortune was mediocre, Archidice refused the sum and the lover. The latter did not regard himself as beaten; he invoked Venus, who gave him, gratuitously, in a dream, what he would have paid for so dearly in reality; he was satisfied and asked no more. The courtezan learned what had happened without her and cited before the magistrates her bankrupt debtor, claiming the price of the dream. The magistrates decided this point of law with great wisdom: they authorized Archidice to dream that she had been paid. (See the notes of Larcher, translator of Herodotus.)

The great epoch of courtezans in Egypt appears to have been that of the Ptolemies in the third century before Christ; but, among the illustrious *filles* some were Greeks, the others came from Asia, and almost all had begun by playing the flute. Ptolemy Philadelphus had a great number in his service; one, Cleine, served him as a cup bearer and he caused statues to be erected to her, representing her clad in a light tunic and holding a chalice or *rithon*; another, Mneside, was one of his musicians; still another, Pothyne, enchanted him by the graces of her conversation; while another, Myrtiun, whom he had taken out of a place of debauchery frequented by boatmen of the Nile, intoxicated him with unclean pleasures. This Ptolemy paid generously for the services which were rendered him, and he honored with a tomb the memory of Stratonice, who had left him tender memories, although she was Greek and not Egyptian. This voluptuous king had no repugnance for the Greeks: he had brought from Argos the beautiful Bilstice, who came of the race of the Atrides, and who forgot her origin in as joyous a fashion as she could. Ptolemy Evergetes, the son of Philadelphus, did not scat-

ter his loves in accordance with his father's example; he was content with Irene, whom he brought to Ephesus, of which he was the governor; and she was so devoted that she even died with him. Ptolemy Philopator put himself at the mercy of an adroit courtesan named Agathoclea, who reigned under his name in Egypt, even as she reigned in his bedroom. Another Ptolemy could not get on without a certain hetaira, whom he had surnamed Hippea, or the Mare, because she shared her affections between him and the provider of fodder for his stables. He loved, above all, to drink with her; and one day, when they were drinking *a plein gosier* he smiled and cried to her, striking her on the rump: "The Mare has eaten too much hay!"



## CHAPTER III.

THE Hebrews were originally of Chaldea and had taken from that country the manners of a pastoral life; and so it is certain that guest-Prostitution existed in remote ages among the Jewish race as it had among the Chaldean herdsmen and hunters. One finds traces of it here and there in the Holy Books. But sacred Prostitution was fundamentally antipathetic to the religion of Moses, and that great legislator, who had taken on himself the task of imposing a bridle on his perverse and corrupt people, was forced to repress, in the name of God, the frightful excesses of legal Prostitution. Hence, that terrible penalty which he had traced in letters of blood on the tables of law, and which was scarcely sufficient to halt the monstrous irruptions of the sons of Abraham.

Perhaps, the most ancient example which exists of guest-Prostitution is to be found in Genesis. From the times of Noah, the sons of God or the Angels had descended on earth to make the acquaintance of the daughters of men, and they had had by these latter children who were giants. These angels would come of an evening to demand shelter in the tent of a patriarch, and they would leave more or less satisfied with what they had found, leaving behind them living memories of their passage. The Book of Genesis does not tell us by what authentic sign one may distinguish an angel from a man; it was only at the end of nine months that this was revealed by the birth of a giant. These giants did not inherit the virtues of their fathers, for the wickedness of men continued to grow; to such a degree that the Lord, indignant at seeing the human species so degenerated and so corrupt, resolved to annihilate it, with the exception of Noah and his family. The deluge renewed the face of the earth, but the passions and the vices which God had wanted to wipe out, reappeared and multi-

plied with men. Hospitality itself was no longer a holy and respected thing in the unclean cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; when the two angels who had announced to Abraham that his wife, Sarah, a hundred and twenty years old, was about to give him a son, went to Sodom and stopped in the house of Lot to pass the night, the inhabitants of the city, from the youngest to the oldest, surrounded the house and called upon Lot: "Where are the men," they said to him, "who have come to you this night? Cause them to come out so that we may know them." . . . "I pray you, my brothers," replied Lot, "do them no evil. I have two daughters who have not yet known a man; I will bring them forth and you may treat them as you please, providing you do no evil to these men, for they have come under the shadow of my roof." Lot, who was even ready to sacrifice the honor of his daughters for the sake of hospitality, would have accorded, may we not think, with good grace to his two guests that which he offered a delirious populace? As to his two daughters, whom the spectacle of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah had not sufficiently frightened to inspire in them sentiments of continence, they strangely abused, one after another, the drunkenness of their unfortunate father.

We have here debauchery, and the most hideous sort, but it is not yet legal Prostitution, which finds a market for its goods, which the law does not condemn, and which usage authorizes. This species of Prostitution is to be seen among the Hebrews from the time of the Patriarchs, eighteen centuries before Christ, when the chaste Joseph, slave and superintendent of the eunuch, Potiphar, in Egypt, resisted the immodest provocations of his master's wife and abandoned to her his cloak rather than his honor. One of the brothers of Joseph, Judah, the fourth son of Jacob, had married in succession to a daughter named Tamar two sons whom he had had with a certain woman of Canaan; these two sons, Er and Onan, dying without children, their widow promised to wed their last brother, Shelah, but Judah was not anxious for

this marriage, seeing a bad omen for it in the fact that the two preceding ones had remained sterile.

Tamar, discontented with her father-in-law, who had promised to marry her to Shelah, conceived a singular means of proving that she was able to become a mother. Knowing that Judah had gone to the heights of Timnath to have his flock sheared, she put on her widow's weeds, wrapped herself in a veil and then took a seat at a crossroads on the route which Judah had to take. "When Judah saw her," we are told in Genesis (Chapter 38),\* "he imagined that she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face in order not to be recognized, and advancing toward her, he said: 'Permit me to go with you!' For he did not suspect that she was his sister-in-law. She replied to him: 'What will you give me to enjoy my embraces?' He said: 'I will give you a kid of my flocks.' Then she replied: 'I will do what you wish, if you give me a token of what you promise.' And Judah said to her: 'What would you have me give you for a token?' She replied, 'Your ring, your bracelet and the staff which you have in your hand.' He drew near to her and she at once conceived; then, rising, she went away and, laying aside the veil which she had taken, she put on once more her widow's weeds. Judah, however, sent a kid by one of his herdsmen who was to bring him back his pledge; but the herdsman did not find the woman in whose hands the pledge had been left, and he asked the passers-by: 'Where is that prostitute who was stationed at the crossroads?' And they replied: 'There has been no prostitute in this place.' And he returned to Judah and said: 'I have not found her, and the people of the place have declared to me that no prostitute has ever been stationed there.' A little while after, they came to announce to Judah that his sister-in-law was with child, and he ordered that she be burned as an adulteress; but Tamar then made known to

\*Inasmuch as the author's biblical quotations are made from the Vulgate, and with the freedom which he usually allows himself in such matters, it has been deemed best to translate LaCroix, rather than the Bible. Those who know their Old Testament will find little difficulty in locating the passages quoted. References, therefore, have been omitted.

him who was the father of the child she bore, by giving him his ring, his bracelet, and his staff."

There certainly we have the most ancient example of legal Prostitution which history is able to furnish, for this incident, reported by Moses with all its characteristic circumstances, goes back to the twenty-first century before Christ. We see already the Jewish prostitute, hidden in the folds of her veil, seated by the side of the road and giving herself to an infamous commerce with the first passer-by who was willing to pay. This, from the earliest antiquity, was the role which Prostitution played among the Hebrews. The Holy Books are filled with passages which show us the crossroads serving as a market and a fair for the *paillardes*, who sometimes remained immobile, wrapped in their veil as in a shroud, and sometimes were clad in immodest habits and richly adorned, burned perfumes and sang voluptuous songs to the accompaniment of the lyre, the harp and the tambour, or danced to the sound of the double flute. These *paillardes* were not Jewesses, at least for the most part, for the Scriptures described them ordinarily as *strange women*; they were Syrians, Egyptians, Babylonians, etc., who excelled in the art of exciting the senses. The law of Moses expressly forbade Jewish women to serve as auxiliaries to that Prostitution which it authorized for men, or which, at least, it did not condemn in the latter case. This explains, then, how it came these *strange women* did not have the right to prostitute themselves within the confines of cities, and why it was the great highways had the privilege of giving asylum to public debauchery. There was no exception to this usage except under the reign of Solomon, who permitted courtesans to establish themselves in the midst of cities. But before his time, and after, they were not to be met with in the streets or at the crossroads of Jerusalem; they were to be seen placing themselves at auction along the roads. There they set up their tents of wild beast skins or of brilliantly colored stuffs. Fifteen centuries after the adventure of Tamar, the prophet Ezekiel, speaking in symbolic language to Jerusalem, the great prostitute,

said: "You have built a brothel and you have made a place of Prostitution at all the crossways; at the head of each road you have set up the sign of your lechery, and you have made an abominable employment of your beauty, and you have abandoned yourself to all the passers-by (*divisisti pedes tuos omni transuenti*, says the Vulgate) and you have multiplied your fornications."

The sojourn of the Hebrews in Egypt, where manners were very depraved, ended in perverting their own and in leading them away from a state of simple nature; they were living in a shameful promiscuity when Moses brought them out of servitude and gave them a code of religious and political laws. Moses, in leading the Jews to the Promised Land, had recourse, of necessity, to a terrible penalty, in order to put a stop to the excess of moral corruption which was dishonoring the people of God. From the height of Mount Sinai, he listened to those words which the Lord pronounced in the midst of lightning and thunder bolts: "Thou shalt not commit fornication! Thou shalt not covet the wife of thy neighbor!" Finally, he himself did not disdain to regulate, in the name of Jehovah, the forms of a species of Prostitution which was an essential part of slavery. "If anyone has sold his daughter as a slave," he says, "she shall not be permitted to quit the service of her master in the manner of other servants. If she is displeasing to the eyes of the master to whom she has been delivered, let the master send her back; but he shall not have the power to sell her to a strange people, if he wishes to be rid of her. If he has affianced her to his son, he shall conduct himself toward her as toward his own daughters. If he has taken for her another, he shall look to the dowry and the garments of his slave, and he shall not deny to her the price of her shame (*pretium pudicitiae non negabit*). If he does none of these three things, she shall leave his service without paying anything." This passage, which commentators have understood in different fashions, proves in the most evident manner that among the Jews, at least before the definitive edition of the tables of the law, the

father had the right to sell his daughter to a master who might make of her his concubine for a time to be determined by the bill of sale. One sees also in this singular piece of legislation that the daughter, sold for the profit of her father, drew no personal advantage from the abandonment which she was forced to make of her body, except in case the master, after having affianced her to his son, wished to replace her by another concubine. It is thus clearly established that the Hebrews trafficked among themselves in the Prostitution of their daughters.

Moses, that wise legislator, who spoke to the Hebrews through the mouth of God, had to deal with incorrigible sinners; he left them, out of prudence, as a feeble recompense for what he took from them, the liberty of having relations with foreign prostitutes; but he was inflexible with regard to the crimes of bestiality and sodomy. "He who shall have carnal relations with a beast shall be punished with death," he says in *Exodus* (Chapter XXII). "Thou shalt not have sexual relations with a man as with a woman," he says in *Leviticus* (Chapter XXVIII), "for it is an abomination; thou shalt not cohabit with any beast, and thou shalt not lie down with it. The woman shall not prostitute herself to a beast and shall not mingle with it, for it is a crime!" Moses, in speaking of these crimes against nature, could not refrain from finding an excuse for the Jews, who had not invented them and who abandoned themselves to them after the example of other peoples. "The nations which I shall chase from in front of you are polluted with all these turpitudes," cries the leader of Israel, "the land in which they dwell has been soiled, and I shall punish it for its iniquity, and the earth shall vomit forth its inhabitants." Moses, who knew how stubborn his people were in their villainous habits, combined menace and prayer with the object of imposing a salutary bridle on the disorders of the senses: "Whoever shall have committed a single one of these abominations shall be cast forth from the midst of my people!" Even this was not enough to frighten the guilty ones; Moses comes back, again and again, to the penalty which is to be inflicted on

them: “The two authors of the abomination shall equally be put to death, stoned or burned, the man and the beast, the beast and the woman, the male and his male accomplice.” Moses had not foreseen that the female sex might give itself to similar enormities. And always he places under the eyes of the Isrealites the necessity of not being like the peoples whom they were to chase from the land of Canaan: “You shall not follow the errors of those nations,” says the Eternal, “for they have practiced those infamies which I forbid you, and I have taken them for an abomination (*Leviticus*, XX).”

The evident object of the law of Moses was to prevent, so far as possible, the Jewish race from degenerating and from perishing as a result of debauches which already had only too far vitiated its blood and impoverished its nature. These debauches, moreover, were a grave prejudice to the development of the population and the public health. Such were, certainly, the two principal motives which determined the legislator not to tolerate legal Prostitution except with foreign women. He forbade it absolutely with Jewish women. “Thou shalt not prostitute thy daughter,” he say in *Leviticus* (Chapter XIX), “in order that the earth may not be soiled nor filled with impurity.” He says again, even more expressly, in *Deuteronomy* (XXIII): “There shall be no prostitutes among the daughters of Israel, nor any procurer among the sons of Israel.” (*non erit meretrix de filiabus Israel nec scortator de filiis Israel*). These two articles of the code of Moses regulated prostitution among the Jews, while the Jews were settled in Palestine and lived in the body of the nation under the government of judges and of kings. The places of debauchery were managed by foreigners, for the most part Syrians; the women of pleasure, spoken of as consecrated, were all foreign, for the most part Syrian women. As for the reasons which had decided Moses to exclude Jewish women from legal Prostitution, they are sufficiently set forth in the chapters of *Leviticus*, where he is not afraid to reveal the disgusting infirmities to which the women of his race were subject. Thence come all the pre-

cautions which he takes to render unions healthy and prolific. In no other manner may one explain that twenty-eighth chapter of *Leviticus*, in which he enumerates all the persons of the feminine sex whose nudity a Jew shall not uncover (*turpitudinem non discoperies*), under pain of disobeying the Eternal: "Let no one approach his mother to cohabit with her!" says the Lord. And so, no Jew could, without committing a crime, have knowledge of his mother or mother-in-law, his sister or sister-in-law, his daughter, granddaughter, or daughter-in-law, his maternal or paternal aunt, his niece or his cousin german. Moses believed it was useful to establish the degrees of consanguinity which represented an incompatible alliance, one as contrary to the physical welfare of a society as to its moral organization. It was from an analogous motive that the approaching of a woman during her menstrual indisposition had been so severely interdicted, the law of Moses punishing this offense with death in certain circumstances. The danger, it was true, was more serious among the Jews than anywhere else.

These Jewish women, however beautiful they were, with their almond eyes, with their voluptuous mouths, coral lips and pearly teeth, with their supple and rounded forms, with their full and rich throats and with their opulent figures, these Jewish women of whom the Shulamite of the Song of Songs offers so seductive a portrait, were afflicted, if one is to believe Moses, with secret infirmities which certain medical archeologists have seen fit to regard as symptoms of venereal disease. One thing is certain, that disease did not come either from Naples or America. It would be imprudent, therefore, and a trifle too daring to utter a pronouncement on a subject so delicate; but in any case, one cannot but approve Moses, who had taken singular precautions for safeguarding the health of the Hebrews and for preventing their progeny from being spoiled in the germ. According to other commentators, a little doubtful as physicians but very clever theologians, we have to deal here merely with a flux of blood and hemorrhoids, in that terrible fifteenth chapter of *Leviticus*, which

begins like this in the most decent translation: "Every man whose flesh flows shall be polluted on account of his flux, and this shall be the pollution of his flux; when his flesh shall let go his flux, or when his flesh shall retain his flux, that shall be his pollution." The text of the *Vulgata* leaves no doubt as to the nature, if not the origin, of this flux: *Vir cui patitur fluxum seminis immundus erit; et tunc indicabitur huic vitio subjacere, cum per singula momenta adhaeserit carni ejus atque concreverit foedus humor.* And that is the reason why Moses ordained ablutions so rigorous and tests so austere for those who *were flowing*, following the expression to be found in orthodox translations of the *Bible*. The sick man, who rendered impure everything which he touched, and whose garments had to be washed in the degree to which he had soiled them, was to take himself to the door of the tabernacle on the eighth day of his flux and sacrifice two turtle-doves or two pigeons, the one for his own sin, the other as a burnt offering. These two pigeons, birds which paganism had consecrated to Venus, on account of their many and ardent caresses, represented evidently the two authors of a sin which had had such distressing consequences. This expiatory sacrifice did not cure the sick man, who remained shut out of Israel and far from the tabernacle of God until his flux had been stopped. Moses imposed true police regulations to stop, so far as possible, an unclean malady, which affected the sources of generation among the Hebrews, which propagated itself by augmenting its ravages, and which ended by infecting all the tribes of Israel.

This malady, moreover, was so aggravated and multiplied during the sojourn of the Israelites in the desert that Moses expelled from the camp all those who had become tainted with it (*Numbers*, Chapter VI). It was by order of the Lord that the children of Israel pursued without pity every leper and *every man who was flowing*. It can be imagined that these unfortunate ones to whom undoubtedly the Eternal did not extend the benefit of his celestial manna, perished of cold and hunger, if not of their malady. It is permissible also to see a connection between this

strange and odious malady and the law of Jealousy, which Moses formulated in order to tranquilize husbands who accused their wives of having compromised their health by committing an adultery which had left baleful traces behind it. Endless and inextinguishable quarrels on this subject arose in Jewish households. The husband suspected his wife and sought proof for his suspicions in the state of their mutual health; the woman would swear in vain that she had not been soiled, and she often imputed to her husband the wrongs with which he reproached her. Then, husband and wife would appear before the sacrificial priest; the husband would offer on behalf of his wife a cake of barley flour, made without oil and known as the *cake of jealousy*; the two would stand in the presence of the Eternal, and the priest would place the cake on the hands of the woman, holding in his own hands the bitter water which brought with it the malediction: "If no man has slept with you, and if, being in the power of your husband, you have not been debauched and soiled, may you be exempt from these bitter waters; but if, being in the power of your husband, you have been debauched and soiled, and if any other than your husband has slept with you, may the Eternal give you over to that execration to which you are subject by oath; and may these waters, which bring malediction, enter into your entrails in order that they may puff out your belly and cause your rump to fall." The woman would respond *Amen*, and would drink the bitter waters, while the priest whirled the cake of jealousy around and offered it upon the altar. If, later, the woman saw her belly puffing out and her rump wasting away, she was convicted of adultery and became infamous in the eyes of Israel. Her husband, on the contrary, with whom everyone sympathized as a victim *free from fault*, was justified if not cured. For, while he had not drunk the bitter waters in the presence of the priest, he often suffered the greater part of the disgusting infirmities and terrible accidents which the execration inflicted upon his criminal wife. When the latter had manifested her innocence, by the prosperous state of her belly, and the plump condition of

her rump, she no longer had to fear the reproaches of her husband and she might go on and have children.

Moses, it may be seen, was not solely occupied with making the Israelites moral: he wished to destroy germs of their villainous maladies, and so he placed his laws of public hygiene under the safeguard of the tabernacle of God. But the Israelites, coming in contact with foreign peoples, the Moabites, Ammonites and Canaanites and all those Syrian races, more or less corrupt and idolatrous, adopted the tastes, customs and vices of their guests or their allies. The most audacious Prostitution flourished among the incestuous descendants of Lot and his daughters. Sacred Prostitution, especially, had extended its immodest empire in the cult of the false gods whom the inhabitants of the country adored with a deplorable frenzy. Moloch and Baal-peor were the monstrous idols of that Prostitution into which the Jewish people were bent on being initiated. Moses was quite right in being severe against the fornicators; the example of the latter was none the less followed by those who surrendered to the appetites of the flesh. And so, a throng of obscene superstitions took root in the manners of the Hebrews, even though the altars of Baal and of Moloch had been cast down and no longer received unclean offerings. Moses, in the twentieth chapter of *Leviticus* and in the twenty-third chapter of *Deuteronomy*, had placed the stigma of infamy on this execrable cult and on the apostates who practiced it to the shame of the true God of Israel: "Whoever among the children of Israel, or among the strangers who dwell in Israel, shall give his seed to the idol of Moloch shall be punished with death; the people shall stone him." Thus spake the Eternal to Moses, in ordering him to restrain from the midst of his people those who fornicated with Moloch. In *Deuteronomy*, it is Moses alone who condemns, without always attaching a determined penalty, certain impurities which concern Baal rather than Moloch: "Thou shalt not offer in the Temple of the Lord the wages of prostitution and the *price of the dog*, whatever may

be the vow which thou hast made, because these two things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord thy God."

Savants have given themselves much trouble in endeavoring to discover what were these Moabite gods, Moloch and Baal-peor; they have extracted from the *Talmud* and from the Jewish commentators the strangest details concerning the idols of these gods and the cult which was rendered to them. Thus, Moloch was represented under the figure of a man with the head of a calf, which, with arms extended, waited while sacrifices were made to him of flour, turtledoves, lambs, rams, calves, bulls and children. These different offerings were placed in the seven mouths which opened in the middle of the belly of this avid brazen divinity, erected upon an immense oven, which was lighted in order to consume at once the seven kinds of offerings. During this holocaust, the priests of Moloch kept up a terrible music with sistrus and tambours, in order to stifle the cries of the victims. Then took place that infamy cursed by the God of Israel: the Molochites abandoned themselves to practices worthy of the land of Onan, and, inspired by the cadenced sound of the musical instruments, they writhed about the incandescent statue, which appeared red through the smoke, and they gave frenzied cries as, in accordance with the Biblical expression, they consigned their posterity to Moloch. This abomination became so naturalized in Israel that some unfortunate and senseless ones even dared to introduce it into the cult of the God of the Jews, and thus to soil his sanctuary. The wrath of Moses took revenge for this, and the law-giver repeated the words of the Eternal: "I shall turn my face against those who commit lechery with Moloch, and I shall exclude them from the midst of my people." This Moloch, or Moloch, was none other than the Mylitta of the Babylonians, the Astarte of the Sidonians, the Venus Genetrix, woman made divine. Hence the offerings which were brought him: flour, to indicate the substance of life; turtledoves, to express the tenderness of love: lambs, to designate fecundity; rams, to characterize the petulance of the senses; calves, to portray the richness of nour-

ishing nature; bulls, to symbolize the creative force; and children, to demonstrate the end of this cult of the goddess. It is understood that, through a shameful exaggeration of religious zeal, the faithful adorers of Moloch, having no children to offer him, would have offered an impure compensation for this cruel sacrifice. For the rest, it would seem that the cult of this unclean Moloch had less vogue than that of Baal-peor among the Jews.

Baal-peor or Belpeor, who was a favorite god of the Midianites, was accepted by the Hebrews with a passion which bears witness to the indecency of his mysteries. This disrespectful deity offsets often the god of Abraham and of Jacob; his detestable cult, accompanied by the most frightful debauches, was never completely destroyed in the Jewish nation, which practiced it secretly, in the woods and in the mountains. This cult was, certainly, that of Adonis or of Priapus. Monuments representing the god are altogether lacking. Certain Jewish writers barely permit themselves to speak, in the voice of tradition, on the subject of Baal, of his statues and his ceremonies. We shall limit ourselves to an attempt to glimpse, behind a decent veil, the scandalous images which Selden, the Abbé Mignot, and Dulaure have endeavored to reconstruct with the aid of erudition. According to Selden, who relies on the authority of Origen and of St. Jerome, Belpeor was represented sometimes by a gigantic phallus, called in the *Bible*: *Species turpitudinis*, and sometimes by an idol with its robe drawn above its head, as though to reveal its turpitude (*ut turpitudinem membra virilis ostenderet*). According to Mignot, the statue of Baal was a monstrous Hermaphrodite; according to Dulaure, it was not remarkable save for the attributes of Priapus. But all scholars who base their conclusions on the Holy Scriptures and upon the commentaries of the Fathers of the Church are agreed on the subject of sacred Prostitution, which was a principal element of this odious cult. The priests of God were handsome young men, without beards, who, with bodies which had been deprived of hair and rubbed with perfumed oils, carried on an ignoble and immodest commerce in

the sanctuary of Baal. The *Vulgate* calls them *effeminate ones* (*effoeminati*); the Hebraic text describes them as *kedescim*, that is to say, *consecrated ones*. Sometimes, these consecrated ones were but mercenaries attached to the service of the temple. Their ordinary role consisted in a more or less active employment in these infamous mysteries; they sold themselves to the adorers of their god and deposited upon the latter's altars the wages of their Prostitution. This was not all; they had dogs trained to the same infamies; and the impure gains derived by them from the sale or rental of these animals was also applied to the revenues of the temple. Finally, in certain ceremonies, which were celebrated at night in the depths of sacred groves, when the stars seemed to veil their faces and flee from fright, priests and consecrated ones would attack each other with knives, covering themselves with scars and slight wounds, and then, heated by wine and excited by their musical instruments, they would fall, pell-mell, into a pool of blood.

This was why Moses wished to have no groves near the temples; this was why, blushing, himself, at the turpitutes which he denounced to the malediction of heaven, he forbade the offering in the house of God of the wages of Prostitution and the *price of the dog*. The effeminate ones formed a sect which had its rites and its initiations. This sect multiplied, under cover, whatever efforts the legislator may have made to wipe it out. It survived the ruin of the idols, and it was propagated even in the temple of the Lord. The origin of these effeminate ones goes back evidently to the profusion of various obscene maladies which had vitiated the blood of women, and which rendered it very dangerous to approach them, before Moses had purified his people by expelling and giving over to execration anyone who was attainted with these endemic maladies: the leprosy, the itch, the flux of blood and fluxes of any kind. When the public health had been somewhat regenerated, the Jews who gave themselves to the cult of Baal were no longer content with their effemimates; and these latter, seeing themselves less sought after, in order to prevent the

diminution of the revenues of their cult, conceived the idea of consecrating to Baal an association of women who should prostitute themselves for the benefit of the altar. These women, named like the others *kedeschoth*, in Biblical language, did not reside with them in the portico or in the confines of the temple; they lived under variegated tents at the approaches to the temple, and they prepared themselves for Prostitution by burning perfumes, by selling philtres and by playing music. These foreign women continued their trade for their own profit after the temple of Baal was no longer there to receive their offerings; and it was they who, trained from infancy for this shameful priesthood, served exclusively the needs of Jewish Prostitution.

The history of sacred Prostitution among the Hebrews begins, then, with the time of Moses, who was not successful in abolishing it, and it reappears here and there in the Holy Books up to the time of the Maccabees.

When Israel was encamped in Shittim, in the land of the Moabites, almost in view of the Promised Land, the people committed much fornification with the daughters of Moab (*Numbers*, Chapter XXV), who invited them to their sacrifices; and it was thus they were initiated into the rites of Belpeor. The Eternal called Moses and ordered him to have those taken who had sacrificed to Belpeor. A terrible malady, born of the debauchery of the Israelites, was already decimating them, and twenty-four thousand were dead of this malady. Moses assembled the judges of Israel to order them to exclude from the people the guilty ones whom the influenza had attainted. "Thereupon, one of the children of Israel, named Zimri, entered, in the presence of his brothers, to a prostitute of the land of Midian, in the view of Moses and the assembly of the judges, who wept before the gates of the tabernacle. Then Phinehas, grandson of Aaron, seeing this scandal, rose up, took a dagger and entered after Zimri into the place of debauchery and pierced with a single stroke the man and the woman in the act of generation." This startling justice put an end to the epidemic which was desolating Israel and ap-

peased the resentment of the Lord. But the moral evil had deeper roots than the physical one, and the abominations of Baal-peor reappeared often among the people of God. They were never more insolent than under the kings of Judea. During the reign of Rehoboam, 980 years before Christ, "the effeminate ones were established in the land and were committing all the abominations of those peoples whom the Lord had blotted out from the face of the sons of Israel." Asa, one of the successors of Rehoboam, caused the effeminate ones to disappear and purged his realm of the idols which defiled it; he even drove out his own mother, Maacha, who presided over the mysteries of Priapus (*in sacris Priapi*) and overturned from top to bottom the temple which she had erected to this god, whose immodest statue (*simulacrum turpisissimum*) he broke to pieces. Jehoshaphat, who reigned following him, annihilated the rest of the effeminate who had been able to escape the severities of his father, Asa. Nevertheless, the effeminate ones were not slow in coming back; the temples of Baal were rebuilt, his statues once more insulted the public modesty; for, two centuries later, the king Josiah was still waging an implacable war on the false gods and their cult, which was mingled at Jerusalem with the cult of the Lord. The temples were demolished, the statues hurled to earth, the impure woods cut down and burned; Josiah did not spare the tents of the effeminate, which these infamous ones had reared even in the interior of Solomon's temple, and which, woven by the hands of women consecrated to Baal, provided an asylum for their strange prostitutions.

An ancient Jewish commentator on the books of Moses adds a number of features pertaining to manners, which had been furnished him by tradition, to the fifteenth chapter of *Numbers*, in which are mentioned the carryings-on of the Israelites with the daughters of Moab. These daughters had erected tents and opened shops (*officinae*) all the way from Bet-Aiscimot to Ar-Ascaleg; there they sold all sorts of trinkets, and the Hebrews ate and drank in the field of Prostitution. When one of them would

go out to take the air and to walk up and down the stretch of tents, a daughter would call to him from the interior of the tent in which she was lying: "Will you come and buy something from me?" And he would buy; on the morrow, he would buy again, and on the third day she would say to him: "Enter and choose me; you are the master here." Then he would enter the tent, and there he would find a chalice filled with Ammonite wine waiting for him: "May it please you to drink this wine!" she would say to him. And he would drink, and this wine would inflame his senses, and he would say to the beautiful daughter of Moab: "Kiss me!" She, drawing from her bosom the image of Peor (without doubt a phallus), would say: "My Lord, if you wish me to give you a kiss, adore my god." . . . What!" he would cry, "can I accept idolatry?" . . . "What difference does it make!" the enchantress would reply, "it is enough to uncover yourself before this image." The Israelite would be careful not to refuse such a bargain as this; he would uncover himself, and the Moabite would end by initiating him into the cult of Baal-peor. To recognize Baal and to adore him, one had, then, but to uncover himself before the god. And so, the Jews, from fear of appearing with bare head in his presence, kept their hats on even in the temple and before the tabernacle of the Lord. The daughters of Moab, it may be, were none too innocent of the wound which was gnawing away at Israel, following the idolatries which they had provoked; for, after the triumphant expedition which Moses had made against the Midianites, all the men having passed the gauntlet of swords, he ordered that a part of the women who remained prisoners should also be killed. "It is they," he said to the captains of his army, "it is they who, at the suggestion of Balaam, have seduced the sons of Israel and caused you to sin against the Lord by showing you the image of Peor. It is necessary, therefore, to slay without pity all the women who have lost their virginity" (*mulieres quae noverunt viros in coitu*).

Moses, in a score of places in his books, appears much preoccupied with the virginity of young girls; the Jewish woman

was obliged to bring a dot to her husband, and one may believe that the Hebrews, however little advanced they may have been in the natural sciences, had certain sure means of ascertaining virginity when it existed, and of proving afterward that it had existed. And so, (*Deuteronomy*, Chapter XXII), when a husband, after he had taken a wife, accused her of not having entered the conjugal bed as a virgin, the father and the mother of the accused would present themselves before the old men, who sat at the gate of the city, and would produce for their eyes the marks of their daughter's virginity, by showing the chemise which she had soiled on her wedding night. In such a case, silence was imposed on the husband, and he had no more objections to make against a virginity so well-established; but, in the contrary case, when the poor woman was not able to produce such evidence, she ran the risk of being convicted of unfaithfulness in her duties, and of then being condemned as one who had committed fornication in the house of her father; and they would lead her to this house and crush her with stones. Moses, like all legislators, had pronounced pain of death against all adulteresses; as for rape, only that of an affianced girl was punished with death, and the victim remained with the man who had outraged her, at least when the crime had been committed in the open; otherwise, it was deemed that the betrothal of the unfortunate one had not been cried or had not been cried enough. If the girl had not yet received the ring of her fiance, her insulter became her husband for having humiliated her (*quia humiliavit illam*), with only the penalty of paying the father of the victim fifty shekels of silver, which was called the *purchase of a virgin*. Moses, more indulgent toward men than toward women, prescribed for the latter a chastity so rigorous that the married woman who saw her husband at grips with another man could not come to his aid under pain of losing her hand; for they cut off the hand of the woman who, by mischance or otherwise, touched the shameful parts of a man; in their combats, the Jews had the habit of resorting all too often to this redoubtable mode of attack, the tendency of which was none

other than to mutilate the Jewish race. It was, then, to prevent these dangerous combats that Moses closed the door of the temple to eunuchs, in whatever fashion they might have become such (*attritis bel amputatis testiculis et abscisso vereto, Deuteronomy*, Chapter XXIII). But all these rigors of the law were only applied to Jewish women; foreign women, whatever they did in Israel or with Israel, were in no wise molested, and Moses himself knew well enough the value of these strange women since, when more than a hundred years of age, he took one for a wife or, rather, for a concubine. She was an Ethiopian who did not adore the god of the Jews, but who was none the less pleasing on this account to Moses. The sister of the favorite of the Eternal, Mary, had to repent for having spoken ill of the Ethiopian, for Moses was annoyed and the Lord was irritated; and so Mary became a leper white as snow, as a punishment for her malign remarks against Moses' black mistress. The latter, who did not always preach by example, would have been ill-advised in demanding of the Israelites a continence which it seemed difficult for him to preserve. He recommended to them only a certain moderation in the pleasures of the senses and chastity in their exterior actions. And so, in accordance with his law, love became a sort of mystery, which was not to be accomplished except with certain conditions of time, place and decency. There were, moreover, many precautions to take in the interest of the public health; the Jewish women were subject to many hereditary indispositions, which the abuse of sexual relations could only aggravate and multiply; families, concentrating, so to speak, on themselves, had impoverished and vitiated their blood. Intemperance was the dominant vice of the Israelites, and their legislator, who had been powerless to render them absolutely chaste and virtuous, only prescribed that they should preserve a certain moderation in their desires and in their pleasures: "Let the sons of Israel," says the Lord to Moses, "wear bands of purple on the hems of their cloaks so that the view of these bands may recall to them the commandments of the Lord and turn away

their eyes and their thoughts from fornification." (*Numbers*, XV).

Strange women or women of pleasure were not so proscribed in Israel that their sons might not take rank and authority among the people of God; and so, the brave Jephthah was born at Gilead, of a prostitute, and he was, none the less, one of the leaders of the army most esteemed by the Israelites. One commentator of the Holy Book has taught that Jephthah, in order to expiate the prostitution of his mother, consecrated to the Lord the virginity of his only daughter. One can scarcely believe, as a matter of fact, that Jephthah really immolated his daughter, and one must see in this human holocaust merely an emblem that was intelligible enough: the daughter of Jephthah wept for her virginity with her companions for two months, before taking the habit of a widow and vowing herself to the service of the Lord. Another commentator, more preoccupied with ancient archeology, has seen in the retreat of this daughter upon the mountain an initiation into the cult of Baal-peor, who had his temples, his statues and his sacred groves in the *high places*, as the Bible often says. Jephthah, then, would have consecrated his daughter to Prostitution, that is to say, to the trade which her mother had practiced; for the rest, the books of *Joshua* and *Judges* show no implacable aversion to prostitutes. When Joshua sent two spies to Jericho, his spies arrived in the night at the house of a daughter of joy named Rahab, "And they slept with her," the Bible tells us. This woman dwelt on the walls of the city, as did the women of her kind who had not the right to live in the interior of cities. There came from the king of Jericho certain ones to take these spies, but she had hidden them under the roof of her house, and she finally aided them to flee the city by means of a rope. These spies promised to save her life and that of all those who were under her roof. Joshua did not fail to keep the promise which his envoys had made to this lecheress, who was spared in the massacre which followed, along with her father, her mother, her brothers and all those who belonged to her. "She has dwelt in

the midst of Israel up to this day," says the author of the book of *Joshua*, who does not appear to be at all scandalized by the residence of a strange woman in the midst of the Israelites. She was not the only one, it is true, and the sacred historian often has occasion to speak of these creatures.

We shall not pause at the birth of Samson, in which might be found certain traces of sacred Prostitution; we shall not remark that his mother was sterile, and that a man of God, whose face was like that of an angel, *came* to this sterile woman to announce to her that she was to have a son; we merely shall point out that Samson, the chosen of the Lord, went into the village of Gaza and there saw a lecheress and entered her house. The Lord, nevertheless, did not forsake him; for, in the middle of the night, Samson arose as well disposed as if he had slept peacefully and tore down the gates of Gaza, which he bore to the summit of the mountain. Finally, he fell in love with a woman who was called Delilah, and who lived in a tent near the river Kedron. She was a courtezan, and her treason which the Philistines purchased with silver, proves that she was not oversatisfied with the generosity of her lover. The Lord did not reproach Samson with the use which he had made of his strength, but did abandon him when the razor had despoiled the head of this Nazarene. Delilah abandoned him also and no longer slept on his knees. The Jews, moreover, might have concubines in their house without any offense to the God of Abraham, for Abraham also had his own. Gideon also had one who bore him a son, in addition to the seventy sons which his wife had given him. As to the Levite of Ephriam, the latter had taken in the land of Bethlehem a concubine who committed lechery in his house, says the Protestant translation of the Bible, and who quitted him to return to the house of her father. It was there that the Levite went, to his own misfortune, to seek her; on his return, he accepted the hospitality which was offered him by an old man of the city of Gibeah and entered his house to pass the night, with his two asses, his concubine, and his servant. The travelers washed their feet, ate and

drank; but, as they went to sleep, the inhabitants of Gibeah, who belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, surrounded the house and, beating on the door, cried to the host: "Bring forth the man who has entered your house so that we may abuse him (*ut abutamur eo*).” The old man came forth to meet these sons of Belial: "Brothers, do not commit this villainous action; for this man is my guest and I must protect him. I have a virgin daughter and this man has a concubine; I will give you these two women and you may assuage your brutality with them; but, I beg you, do not stain yourselves with a crime against nature by abusing this man." The furious ones would hear nothing; finally, the Levite of Ephriam placed his concubine out of doors and abandoned her to the Benjamites, who abused her all night. The following morning they sent her back, and the unfortunate woman, exhausted by this horrible debauchery, was barely able to drag herself through the door where her lover slept; she fell dead, her hands thrown out across the threshold. It was in this sad state that the Levite found her and raised her up. Although he had, in a manner, sacrificed her himself, he was all the more ardent to avenge her. Israel took up his cause of the concubine and armed itself against the Benjamites, who were almost exterminated. What remained of the guilty tribe would have left no posterity, if the other tribes, which had sworn not to give their daughters to the sons of Belial, had not been inspired to make prisoners of the daughters of Jabesh in Gilead and to take the daughters of Shiloh in Canaan for the purpose of repeopling this land, which the frightful war had changed into a solitude. The Benjamites then took for wives these foreign and idolatrous women.

These foreign women, no doubt, were not slow in re-establishing the cult of Moloch and of Baal-peor in Israel, as was done a little later by the concubines of King Solomon. Under this king, who reigned a thousand years before Christ, and who raised the Jewish people to the highest degree of prosperity, the license of manners was pushed to the extreme limit. King David, in his

old age, was content to take a young virgin who would care for him and would keep him warm at night in her couch. The Lord, despite this innocent velleity of an old man frozen by age, did not forsake him and often visited him still. But Solomon, after a glorious and magnificent reign, allowed himself to be carried away by the fury of his carnal passions; he loved, in addition to the daughter of a Pharaoh of Egypt, whom he had espoused, a number of foreign women, Moabites, Ammonites, Idumeneans, Sidonians and others whom the God of Israel had ordered him to flee as he would dangerous sirens. But Solomon gave himself with frenzy to these disorders. (*Hic itaque copulatus est ardentissimo amore.*) He had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, who turned his heart away from the true God. He then fell to adoring Astarte, goddess of the Sidonians; Chemosh, god of the Moabites, and Moloch, god of the Ammonites; he erected temples and statues to these false gods on a mountain situated opposite Jerusalem. He burned incense to them and offered them impure sacrifices. These sacrifices, offered to Venus, to Adonis and to Priapus, under the names of Moloch, Chemosh and Astarte, had for priestesses the wives and concubines of Solomon. There were, indeed, during the reign of this wise and voluptuous king, so great a number of foreign women who lived by Prostitution in the midst of Israel that two prostitutes are even to be found figuring as heroines in the celebrated judgment of Solomon. The Bible has these two women of an evil life (*meretrices*) appearing before the throne of the King, who decides between them and settles their differences without displaying any contempt for them.

At this epoch, Prostitution had, then, a legal existence, authorized and protected, among the Jewish people. The foreign women, who had, so to speak, a monopoly of it, had crept even into the interior of cities and there exercised their shameful industry publicly, brazenly, without fearing any corporal or pecuniary punishment. Two chapters of the Book of Proverbs of Solomon, the fifth and the seventh, are almost a picture of Prosti-

tution and its character at that time. One may deduce from certain passages in Chapter V that these strange women were not exempt from terrible maladies, born of debauchery and which they often communicated to the libertines, who were consumed by them (*quando consumperis carnes tuas*): "The lips of a courtezan distill honey," says Solomon, "Her mouth is sweeter than oil; but she leaves traces bitterer than absinthe and sharper than a two-edged sword. . . . Turn from her voice and do not approach the threshold of her house, from fear of giving your honor to an enemy and the rest of your life to a cruel disease; from fear of exhausting your strength to the profit of a lecheress and of enriching her house at your own expense." In Chapter VII, we have another scene of Prostitution which differs little in its details from those that take place in our day under the vigilant eye of the police; it is a scene which Solomon certainly had viewed from a window of his palace, and which he had painted after nature, with the brush of a poet and a philosopher: "From a window of my house," he says, "across the lattice work, I have seen, and I see, men who appear to me very small. I consider a young fool who crosses the road and who advances toward the house at the corner, as day declines in the twilight and the mist. And here is a woman who runs toward him, adorned as are the courtezans, always ready to surprise our souls, chirping and wandering, so impatient of repose that their feet never stay in a house; but sometimes at their doors, sometimes in the public places, sometimes at the corners of the streets, they set up their ambuscades. She seizes the young man, she kisses him, she smiles on him with a teasing air: 'I have promised offerings to the gods on account of you,' she says to him, 'and today my vows are to be crowned. It is for this reason that I have come to meet you, desiring to see you, and I have found you. I have bound my bed with cords, I have covered it with painted rugs come out of Egypt; I have perfumed it with myrrh, with aloes and with cinnamon. Come, let us be drunk with pleasure, let us enjoy our own ardent kisses until the day reappears. For my master (*vir*)

is not in the house; he has gone on a far journey; he has taken with him a sack of silver; he will not return before the full moon.' She has twined the young man with such words as these and, by the seduction of her lips, she ends by carrying him away. And now he follows her, as the bull led to the altar follows the sacrifice; like the lamb which disports itself, not knowing it is about to be strangled, and which only learns it when a mortal wound pierces its heart; like the bird which falls into the net, without knowing it is to lose its life. And now, my children, listen to me and have regard for the words of my mouth: let not your spirit be drawn into the path of that impure woman, and let her not lead you astray with her steps; for she has overthrown many men, gravely wounded, and the strongest have been slain by her." Solomon, in the midst of his orgies with his concubines, celebrating the mysteries of Moloch and of Baal, the great King Solomon, probably had forgotten his own Proverbs. Solomon, nevertheless, repented and died in the peace of the Lord.

The scourge of Prostitution remained always attached, like leprosy, to the Jewish nation; not only legal Prostitution, which was tolerated by the law of Moses in the interest of purity in domestic manners, but also sacred Prostitution, which accounted for the presence of so many foreign women, reared in the religion of Moloch, of Chemosh and of Baal-peor, in the midst of Israel. The prophets, whom God raised unceasingly to govern and correct his people, found that people occupied in sacrificing to the Gods of Moab and of Ammon, on the summit of the mountains and in the shadows of the sacred groves; the air was filled with licentious chants and with the perfumes which the prostitutes burned in front of them. There were tents of debauchery at the crossways of all the roads and even at the gates of the Lord's temples. The scandalous spectacle of Prostitution must constantly have afflicted the eyes of the prophet, since his prophecies reflected at every instant immodest images. Isaiah says to the city of Tyre, which had prostituted itself with all the nations of the earth: "Take a cithera, courtezan condemned to forgetfulness,

dance about the city, sing, make your instrument resound, that they may be mindful of you!" One sees from this passage that the *strange women* made music to announce their merchandise. Jeremiah says to Jerusalem, which, like a wild mare, breathed on all sides the emanations of physical love: "Courtezan, you have wandered on all the hills, you have prostituted yourself under all the trees!" Jeremiah pictures for us, under the most hideous colors, those impure children of Israel who soiled themselves with lust in the house of a lecheress, and who became the courtiers of Prostitution. (*Moecheati sunt et in domo meretricis luxurabantur; equi amatores et emissarii facti sunt.*) The Jews, when they were led into captivity at Babylon, found no cause for astonishment at what they saw of the disorders and obscene excesses of the cult of Mylitta, whom they already knew under the name of Moloch. Jeremiah shows them, with a holy indignation, the priests who traffic in Prostitution, the gods who preside over it, the gold of the sacrifice, which pays for the labors of the courtezan, and the courtezan herself rendering to the altars the hundredth part of what she has received. (*Dant autem et ex ipso prostitutis, et meretrices ornant, et iterum, cum receperint illud a meretricibus, ornant deos suos.*)

But Israel might now, in the field of Prostitution, teach all the peoples who had instructed it and whom it had surpassed. The prophet Ezekiel gives us a terrifying picture of Jewish corruption. These frightful prophecies are filled with little else than bad places open to every comer, tents of lechery planted on all the roads, houses of scandal and impudicity; one sees only courtezans clad in silk and embroidered robes, gleaming with jewels, laden with perfumes; one sees only infamous scenes of fornication. The great prostitute, Jerusalem, who gives herself to the children of Egypt for the sake of their promising figures, makes presents to the lovers with whom she is satisfied, in place of demanding of them a wage: "I shall give you over into the hands of those to whom you have abandoned yourself," the Lord says to her, "and they shall destroy your brothel, and they shall

demolish your dwelling; they shall despoil your vestments, and they shall bear away your basins of gold and silver, and they shall leave you naked and full of ignominy." It must be that Jerusalem had carried its prevarications to a climax to be so menaced by the prophet with the fate of Sodom. That Prostitution which made the sons of God suffer most must have been the one which persisted in finding shelter under the eaves of Solomon's temple. This temple, from the time of the Maccabees, a century and a half before Christ, was still the theater of commerce for those prostitutes who came there to seek customers. (*Templum luxuria et comessationibus gentium erat plenum et scortantium cum meretricibus*). It may be believed that this state of things had not changed up to the time when Jesus drove the money-changers from the temple, and although the evangelists do not explain the nature of that commerce of which Jesus purged the Lord's house, the Book of Maccabees, written a hundred years before, indicates what it might have been. Moreover, there is talk of turtledove merchants in the gospel of St. Mark, and it may be presumed that these birds, dear to Venus and to Moloch, were for no other purpose than that of providing offerings to lovers. The law of Jealousy, so poetically conceived by Moses, did not prescribe for husbands this sacrifice of the turtledove but only that of a cake of barley flour.

Jesus, who was impitiable toward these parasitic guests of the sanctuary, and who broke the counter of their iniquity, shows himself, still, full of indulgence with regard to women, as if he pitied their weaknesses. When the Samaritan woman found him seated by a well, this strange woman who had had five husbands and who had lived in concubinage with a man, met with no reproach from the lips of Jesus, who entered gently into conversation with her, as he drank the water which she had drawn from the well. The disciples of Jesus were astonished at seeing him in the company of such a woman and remarked disdainfully: "Why do you speak to that creature?" The disciples were more intolerant than their divine Master, for they would willingly have stoned,

in accordance with the law of Moses, another adulterous woman, whom Jesus saved, saying: "Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone at her!" Finally, the Son of Man did not fear to absolve publicly a prostitute who was ashamed of her guilty trade. When he was sitting at table in the house of a Pharisee, at Capernaum, a woman of evil life (*peccatrix*), who dwelt in that city, brought a vase of alabaster containing a perfumed oil; she bathed with her tears the feet of the Savior, anointing them with oil and drying them with her hair. When the Pharisee saw this, he said to himself: "If he were a prophet, he would know who this woman is who touches him, for she is a sinner." Jesus, turning towards this woman, said to her with angelic kindness: "Your sins, however great and however numerous they may be, are forgiven you because you have loved much." These words of Jesus have been commentated and tortured in many ways; but one thing is sure, the Son of God who pronounced them had no intention of encouraging the sinner to continue her way of life. He chased away seven demons who possessed this woman, named Mary Magdalen; and it is possible, these were but seven libertines with whom she had relations. The Magdalen became, from then on, a holy woman, a repentant sinner; she attached herself to the divine Redeemer, who had delivered her; she followed him in tears all the way to Calvary; she sat, weeping all the while, before his sepulchre. It was to her that Christ appeared first of all, to give her striking evidence of his pardon. This sinner was placed among the saints, and if, during all the Middle Ages, she did not feel greatly honored at being the patroness of sinning women, who had not imitated her conversion, she at least consoled them by her example and, even in the depths of those cursed retreats, she showed them still the road to Heaven. (*Remittuntur ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum.*)

## CHAPTER IV

SACRED Prostitution existed in Greece from the time that gods and temples were to be found there; it goes back, thus, to the origin of Greek paganism. That theogony, which the poetic imagination of the Hellenic race had created, more than eighteen centuries before the modern era, was but an allegoric poem, based, in a manner, upon the sports of love of the universe. All religions had had the same cradle; everywhere was the female nature unfolding and generating at fecund contact with the male nature; everywhere were man and woman made divine in the most significant attributes of their sexes. Greece received from Asia the cult of Venus, along with that of Adonis, and since there were not enough of these amorous divinities to go around, Greece multiplied them under a hoard of different names, so that there were as many Venuses as there were temples and statues. Priests and poets, with common accord, took upon themselves the task of inventing and writing the annals of their gods, and in this they developed but a single theme, that of sensual pleasure. In this ingenious and charming mythology, Love reappeared at every moment, with varied character, and the history of each god or goddess was but a voluptuous hymn in honor of the sexes. It is easy to understand how Prostitution, which shows itself under so many forms in the Odyssey, in the metamorphoses of gods and goddesses, must have been a reflection of Greek manners at the time of Ogyges and of Inachus. Could a nation whose religious beliefs were but a mass of impure legends ever have been chaste and restrained?

Greece accepted, from heroic times, the cult of the woman and the man turned into divinities, similar to the one which Babylon and Tyre had established in Cyprus; this cult came from the island which had been especially consecrated to it, spreading from

island to island in the Archipelago until it soon reached Corinth, Athens and all the cities of Ionia. Then, to the degree in which Venus and Adonis had been naturalized in the fatherland of Orpheus and of Hesiod, they lost something of their Chaldean and Phoenician origin; they fashioned themselves, so to speak, after a civilization more polished and more refined, but not less corrupt. Venus and Adonis are more veiled than they had been in Asia Minor, but, under this veil, there are delicacies and refinements of debauchery which were probably unknown in the sacred enclosures of Mylitta and in the mysterious groves of Belpeor. Information is lacking to enable us to reconstruct, in all their secret details, the cult of the Greek Venuses, especially in the epochs prior to the fine centuries of Greece; the poets merely offer us here and there separate traits which, if they indicate everything, are precise about nothing. The philosophers avoid pictures and hurl themselves at hazard into vague moral generalities; the historians present us only with isolated facts, which often do not explain each other; finally, the figurative monuments, with the exception of a few medallions and a few inscriptions, have all perished. We possess merely notions sufficiently numerous with regard to the principal Venuses, for the name and attributes of Venus are attached more particularly to the subject with which we are dealing. The simple enumeration of these Venuses will relieve us of the necessity of having recourse to conjectures, more or less based upon appearances. Sacred Prostitution, ceasing to be practiced for the profit of the temple and the priest, had left, in rites and religious usages, a profound trace of its empire.

The Venus who personifies, so to speak, this Prostitution, was called Pandemos. Socrates says, in the *Banquet* of Xenophon, that there are two Venuses, the one celestial, the other human or Pandemos; that the cult of the first is chaste and that of the second criminal. Socrates lived in the fifth century before Christ, a skeptical philosopher who submitted religions themselves to his own inflexible judgment. Plato, in his *Banquet*, also speaks of the two Venuses, but he is less severe with regard to Pandemos.

"There are two Venuses," he says, "the one very ancient, without mother and the daughter of Uranus, from whom she gets the name of Uranios; the other younger, the daughter of Jupiter and Diana, whom we call Venus Pandemos."\* This is the Venus of the people (*pan*, all; *demos*, the people); she was the first divinity whom Theseus caused to be adored by the people he had assembled within the walls of Athens; hers was the first goddess' statue to be erected in the public place of that rising city. This ancient statue, which already existed no longer when Pausanias wrote his *Voyage* in Greece, and which had been replaced by another, the work of a clever sculptor and more modest than the first, made a permanent appeal to Prostitution. Scholars are not in agreement as to the pose which the artist gave it, but it may be presumed that this pose represented a special characteristic of the goddess. Theseus, to whom the character of this statue was clearer, had placed next to the statue of Pandemos that of Pytho, goddess of persuasion. The two goddesses expressed so well what it was desired they should express that at every hour of the day or night someone might be seen coming to make an act of public obeisance before them. And so, when Solon had collected, from the income of the dictionaries which he had founded at Athens, the necessary sum for erecting a temple to the goddess of Prostitution, he caused this temple to be built opposite the statue, which drew about its pedestal a constant procession of faithful proselytes. The courtesans of Athens were very much given to the fetes of Pandemos, which were renewed the fourth day of each month, and which gave rise to strange excesses of religious zeal. On those days, the courtesans only exercised their trade for the profit of the goddess, and they dispensed in offerings of silver what they had gained under the auspices of Pandemos.

This temple, dedicated by the wise Solon to the Venus of the people, was not the only one which bore witness to the cult of

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\*The author mixes, without regard to hybrids, the Greek and Latin names of Venus: *Venus Uranios*, *Venus Pandemos*, etc. His nomenclature has been followed here.

Prostitution in Greece. There were others in Thebes, in Boeotia and at Megalopolis in Arcady. The one at Thebes dated from the time of Cadmus, the founder of that city. Tradition tells us that the statue to be seen in this temple had been made from the brazen heads of the ships which had brought Cadmus to the Theban land. It was the offering of Harmony, daughter of Cadmus; the princess, indulgent toward the pleasures of love, had been pleased to consecrate this symbol to the goddess, devoting to her these bulwarks or beaks of metal which had grounded in the sand to give birth to a city. In the temple at Megalopolis, the statue of Pandemos was accompanied by two other statues, which presented the goddess under three different aspects, more decent and less nude. These statues of Pandemos all had a sufficiently bold physiognomy, for they were not preserved from a time when manners imposed veils even on goddesses; the one at Elis, where Pandemos also had a celebrated temple, had been remade by the famous sculptor, Scopas, who entirely changed the posture, and who was content with a very transparent emblem, placing this Venus on the back of a goat with golden horns.

Venus was adored at a score of places in Greece under the name of Hetaira or of Porne; the former indicated sufficiently the nature of the deeds of grace which were done in her name. Her ordinary adorers were the courtezans and their lovers; each offered her sacrifices in order to be taken under her protection. This Venus, however disreputable she may have been in her cult, still recalled an historic fact, which was to the honor of courtezans, but which, unfortunately, belonged to the fabulous times of Greece. In accordance with a tradition of which the city of Abydos was proud, that city, reduced once to slavery, had been delivered by a courtezan. One fete day, the foreign soldiers, who were masters of the city, and who had been posted to guard its gates, fell into a drunken orgy with courtezans and were put to sleep to the music of flutes. One of these courtezans seized the keys of the city and, returning over the walls, went to warn her fellow citizens, who armed themselves,

slew the sleeping sentinels and drove the enemy from their city. In memory of their recovered liberty they erected a temple to Venus Hetaira. This Venus also had a temple at Ephesus, but we do not know whether its origin was so honorable as that of the temple of Abydos. Each of these temples, moreover, evoked a particular tradition. That on the promontory of Simas, on the Euxine Sea, had been constructed at the expense of a beautiful courtezan who dwelt in that place, and who waited on the banks of the sea for Venus, who had been born of the waves, to send her passers-by. It was in memory of this priestess of Venus Hetaira that the prostitutes were called *Simaethes*, in the neighborhood of that promontory, which lured sailors from afar to the cult of the goddess, and which opened its consecrated grottoes to this cult. The temple of Venus Courtezan at Samos, who was called the goddess of reeds and of swamps, had been built with the fees of Prostitution by the hetairae who followed Pericles to the siege of Samos, and who trafficked there in their charms for enormous sums. (*Ingentem ex prostituta forma quaestum fecerant*, says Athenaeus, whose Greek is even more energetic than this Latin translation.) But although Venus possessed the name of *Hetaira*, the fetes which were celebrated in Magnesia under the name of *Hetairides* had nothing to do with her; they had been instituted in honor of Jupiter Hetairos and of the expedition of the Argonauts.

It was not enough to have given to Venus the name of courtezans whom she inspired and who commended themselves to her; they gave her also other names, which were not less suited to these favored priestesses. That of *Peribasia*, for example, in Latin *Divaricatrix*, had allusion to the movements which provoked and ruled pleasure. This Venus was nominally adored by the residents of Argos, as St. Clement of Alexandria tells us, and the latter does not hesitate to inform us that the bizarre name of the Moving One had come to her *divaricantis cruribus*. The Peribasia of the Greeks became with the Romans *Salacia*, or Venus Lubrica, who takes still other analogous and more characteristic names. The famous architect of the labyrinth of Crete, Daeda-

Ius, from love of mechanics, had dedicated to this goddess a statue in quicksilver. The gifts offered to the goddess made allusion to the qualities which she was supposed to possess. These gifts offered, which were sometimes very rich, recalled, in general, the condition of the women who had deposited them on the altar or suspended them from the pedestal of the statue. They were most often phalli in gold, in silver, in ivory or in mother-of-pearl; there were also precious jewels and, especially, mirrors of polished silver, with chasing and inscriptions. These mirrors were always considered as attributes of the goddess and of courtesans. Venus was represented with a mirror in her hand; she was also represented holding a vase or a bottle of perfume: for, says the Greek poet, "Venus does not imitate Pallas, who bathes sometimes but who perfumes herself never." The courtesans, who were so interested in rendering Venus propitious, despoiled themselves for her sake of all the objects of the toilet which they loved best. Their first offering must be their girdle; they possessed also combs, pincers for depilatory purposes, pins and other little gewgaws, in gold and in silver, which respectable women did not permit themselves, and which Venus Courtezan might accept without scruple from these humble imitators. And so, the poet, Philetaerus, cries with enthusiasm in his *Corinthiaste*: "It is not without reason that one sees, throughout all Greece, temples erected to Venus Courtezan, and not to the Venus of marriage."

Venus had in Greece many other titles which had to do with certain particularities of her cult, and the temples which were reared to her under these often obscene titles were more frequented and richer than those of Venus Pudica or of Venus the Armed. Sometimes she was adored under the name of *Melanis* or the *Dark One*, as the goddess of the amorous night; this was the one who appeared to Lais to tell her that her lovers were coming from all directions with magnificent presents; she had temples at Melangiae in Arcady, at Cranium near Corinth and at Thespiae in Boeotia, and these temples were surrounded with groves, im-

penetrable by day, in which one went groping his way in search of adventures. Sometimes she was called *Mucheia*, or the goddess of lairs; *Castnia*, or the goddess of indecent copulations; *Scotia*, or the *Shadowy One*; *Derceto*, or the *Gadder*; *Callipyge*, or *She of the Beautiful Buttocks*, etc. Venus, the veritable Proteus of love, or, rather, of pleasure, had, for each of her transformations, a special mythology, always ingenious and allegoric. She represented, consistently, the woman fulfilling the duties of her sex. And so, when she was *Derceto*, or the goddess of Syria, she had fallen from Olympus into the sea, and there she had met a great fish whom she had besought to lead her to the coast of Syria, where she rewarded her saviour by placing him among the stars: to translate this fable into human language, one need but imagine a beautiful Syrian maiden, lost in a shipwreck and saved by a fisherman, who had been smitten with her. The name of *Derceto* expressed her comings and goings on the coast of Syria with the fisherman who had received her into his bark. The priests of Derceto had given a more mystic form to the allegory. According to them, in the epochs contemporary with chaos, a gigantic egg had been detached from heaven and had rolled into the Euphrates; the fishes pushed this egg to the bank, doves swarmed upon it, and Venus came forth: and that is why doves and fishes are sacred to Venus; but it is not known to which species of fish the goddess accorded her preference. Finally, there was a *Venus Mechanitis*, or *Mechanical Venus*, whose statues were of wood, with feet, hands and a mask in marble; these statues were moved by hidden means and took the most capricious poses.

This goddess was, without doubt, under her diverse aspects, the goddess of beauty; but the beauty which she apotheosized was less that of the face than that of the body; and the Greeks, more in love with statuary than with painting, made more ado about form than about color. Beauty of face, as a matter of fact, belonged almost indiscriminately to all the goddesses of the Greek Pantheon, while beauty of body was one of the divine attributes of Venus. When the Trojan shepherd, Paris, awarded the apple

to the most beautiful of the three rival goddesses, he did not decide his choice between them until he had seen them without veils. Venus did not represent, therefore, intelligent beauty, the soul of the woman; she represented only material beauty, the body of the woman. Poets and artists attributed to her a very small head with a high and narrow forehead, but, by way of compensation, a body and members very long, plump and supple. Perfection of beauty, with the goddess, began, above all, with the loins. The Greeks regarded themselves as the first connoisseurs in the world of this kind of beauty. And yet, it was not Greece but Sicily which founded a temple to Venus Callipyge. This temple owed its origin to a judgment which was not quite so famous as that of Paris, for the parties were not goddesses, and the judge did not have to decide between three. Two sisters, in the environs of Syracuse, while bathing one day, fell into a dispute over a beauty prize; a young man of Syracuse who happened to be passing and who caught a glimpse of the contestants without being seen himself, bent his knee to the earth, as though before Venus herself, and cried out that the elder had won the victory. The two adversaries fled, half naked. The young man came back to Syracuse and, still greatly moved with admiration, recounted what he had seen. His brother, marveling at the recital, declared that he would be content with the younger. It ended by their collecting all they possessed that was most precious and going to the father of the two sisters with the request that they might become his sons-in-law. The younger, desolate and indignant at having been vanquished, fell ill; she requested a retrial of the case, and the two brothers, by common agreement, proclaimed they had both equal rights to the victory, according as the judge regarded one of them from the right side and the other from the left. The two sisters married the two brothers and brought with them to Syracuse a reputation for beauty which grew with time. The statue, which was to be admired in the temple there, shared at once the secret charms of each sister, and the union of these two models in a single copy had formed the perfect type of beauty which was an

attribute of Venus Callipyge. It is a poet, Cercidas of Megalopolis, who has immortalized this copy, without having seen the originals. Athenaeus reports the same anecdote, which is one, evidently, that hides under transparent veils the story of two Syracusan courtezans.

If the courtezans reared temples to Venus, they were also authorized, at least in the early times of Greece, to offer sacrifices to the goddess and to take an active part in her public fetes, in addition to certain fetes, such as the Aphrodisia and the Aloennes, which they reserved more particularly for themselves, and which they celebrated behind closed doors. They fulfilled, sometimes, the functions of priestesses in the temples of Venus, and they were attached to these temples to assist in making a living for the priests and in augmenting the revenues of the altars. Strabo says positively that the temple of Venus at Corinth possessed more than a thousand courtezans, who had been consecrated to the goddess through the devotion of her worshipers. It was a general usage in Greece thus to consecrate to Venus a certain number of young girls, when one wished to render the goddess favorable, or when one had seen his vows fulfilled by her. Xenophon of Corinth, in speaking of the Olympic games, promises Venus he will consecrate to her fifty *hetairai* if she will give him the victory; he is the victor, and he fulfills his promise. "O sovereign of Cyprus," cries Pindar, in the Ode composed in honor of this offering, "Xenophon has come to bring to your vast grove a troop of fifty beautiful girls!" Then, he addresses the latter: "O young girls, who receive all strangers and give them hospitality, priestesses of the goddess Pytho in the rich Corinth, it is you who, by burning incense before the image of Venus and invoking the mother of Loves, win for us, often, her celestial aid and procure for us those sweet moments we taste upon the voluptuous couches where the tender fruit of beauty is plucked!" This consecration of courtezans to Venus was especially in vogue at Corinth. When the city had a request to make of the goddess, she never failed to confide it to the *consecrated ones*, who were the

first to enter the temple and the last to leave. According to Cornelian of Heraclea, Corinth, on certain important occasions, caused herself to be represented before Venus by an innumerable procession of courtezans in the costumes of their trade.

The employment of these consecrated ones in the temples and the groves of the goddess is sufficiently attested by a number of figurative monuments, which are less discreet in this respect than are the contemporary writers. The paintings of the two chalices and the two Greek vases, cited by the learned M. Lajard, after the descriptions of MM. Witte and Lenormand, leave us no doubt with regard to this sacred Prostitution, which was perpetuated in the cult of Venus. One of these vases, which forms a part of the celebrated Durand collection, represents a temple of Venus, in which a courtezan is receiving, through a slave, the propositions of a stranger, crowned with myrtle, who stands outside the temple and holds a purse in his hand. On the second vase, a stranger, similarly crowned with myrtle, is seated on a couch and appears to be trafficking with a courtezan, who stands upright before him in a temple. M. Lejard attributes the same significance to an engraved stone, cut with a number of faces, five of which bear animals, emblems of the cult of the Oriental Venus, while the sixth represents a courtezan looking into a mirror while she gives herself to a stranger. But that which went on in the temples and in the sacred groves has left no more characteristic traces than these among the authors of antiquity, who did not dare betray the mysteries of Venus.

If the courtezans were welcome in the court of their goddess, they were not permitted, on the other hand, to mingle except from afar in that of other goddesses, and so they celebrated in the interior of their houses, after the vintage, the *Haloa*\* or the fêtes of

\*For the *Haloa*, see the Encyclopaedia Britannica article on *Demeter* (signed J. H. F.): "In addition to being a harvest festival, marked by the ordinary popular rejoicings, the *Haloa* had a religious character. The *aparchai* (first fruits) were conveyed to Eleusis, where sacrifice was offered by a priestess, men being prohibited from undertaking the duty. A *telete* (initiatory ceremony) of women by a woman also took place at Eleusis, characterized by obscene jests and the use of phallic emblems," etc. *Haloa* is obviously from *halos*, threshing-floor.

Ceres and of Bacchus. There were certain licentious suppers which composed the ritual of these fetes, in which the courtezans gathered with their lovers to eat, drink, laugh, sing and disport themselves. "At the next fete of Haloa," writes Megara to Bacchis in the letters of Alcyphron, "we shall gather at Colyte in the house of the lover of Thessala, there to eat together; be sure to come." ". . . We had come to the feast of Haloa," writes Thais to Thessala, "and we had all gathered at my house to celebrate the eve of the fete." These suppers, called the *little mysteries of Ceres*, were but pretext for debauchery, which lasted a number of days and a number of nights. It appeared that, in certain temples of Ceres, in the one at Eleusis, for example, the courtezans, the sight of whom respectable women ordinarily fled, had succeeded in having a hall opened for themselves, which they alone had the right to enter without priests, and where one of them presided at the religious ceremonies which her companions, like so many vestals, embellished with their more than ordinarily chaste presence. During these ceremonies, the old courtezans gave lessons to the young ones in the science and practice of the mysteries of the Good Goddess. The pontiff, Archias, who was permitted to offer a sacrifice to the Ceres of Eleusis in the hall of courtezans, without the intervention of their high priestess, was accused of impiety by Demosthenes and condemned by the people.

All the gods, however, and all the goddesses as well, accepted the offerings which the courtezans brought them, without the latter daring to enter in person those temples the thresholds of which were closed to them. The famous courtezan, Cottine, who made herself so famous that she gave her name to the dicterion which she had occupied near Colonae, opposite a temple of Bacchus, dedicated, in honor of one of her gallant Spartan lads, a small brass bull, which was placed on the front of the temple of Minerva. This votive bull was still in place in the time of Athenaeus. But there was a god who naturally showed himself less severe toward the women of pleasure; this was Adonis, deified by

Venus, who had loved him. The fetes of Adonis were, moreover, so bound up with those of the goddess that one could not well adore one without rendering homage to the other. Adonis had had also, in ancient times, a large part in the offerings of sacred Prostitution, before his cult had been confused with that of Priapus. Courtezans of all conditions profited thus from the fetes of Adonis, and they, in the exercise of their industry, under the protection of the god and for his profit, in the groves which surrounded his temples, drew many strangers from all sides. "In the place I am taking you to," says a courtier to a cook, whom he is about to place in a house, "there is a brothel (*porneon*): a renowned hetaira there celebrates the fetes of Adonis with a numerous troop of companions." The Athenians, despite the just reprobation which their moralists attached to the life of courtezans, found these courtezans, nevertheless, on their Olympus as in their temples, for altars and statues were erected to Venus Leoena and to Venus Lamia, to apotheosize the two mistresses of Demetrius Poliorcetes.

## CHAPTER V.

SACRED Prostitution, which existed in all the temples of Athens at the time Solon was giving laws to the Athenians, must have invited legislators to establish legal Prostitution. As to guest Prostitution, which was contemporary with the heroic ages of Greece, it had disappeared without leaving any traces in the manners of the people; and marriage was too well protected by legislation, the legitimacy of children seemed too necessary to the honor of the republic, for the memory of the metamorphoses and human incarnation of the gods to have much force against conjugal faith and respect for the family. Solon saw the altars of the priests becoming rich with the product of that Prostitution which was carried on by the consecrated ones, who only sold themselves to strangers, and he naturally dreamed of procuring the same benefits for the State, and, by this means, serving at once the pleasures of the Athenian youth and the security of respectable women. And so, he founded as an establishment of public utility a great dicterion,\* in which slaves, purchased with the funds of the state and supported by its revenues, laid a daily tribute on the vices of the population and labored shamelessly to augment the revenues of the republic. There has been an attempt, in the absence of historic proof, which tradition, it is true, does not support, to relieve the wise Solon of the moral responsibility of having legally instituted libertinism at Athens; it has been pretended that this great legislator, whose code breathes of modesty and chastity, would not have given himself the lie by opening the gate to debauchery on the part of his fellow citizens; but, in a fact of this nature, which seems beneath the dignity of history, we must have recourse to that tradition which was ac-

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\*House of prostitution. This has been treated as an English word in the present text.

cepted by Athens, and which has been preserved as well in the works handed down from his time; in tradition, we have an echo of that dicterion which Solon had founded and which was thus glorified by its origin.

Nicander of Colophon, in his *History of Athens*, today lost, had stated positively that Solon, indulgent towards the ardors of petulant youth, not only had bought slaves and placed them in public houses but also had built a temple to Venus Courtezan with the silver which the impure inmates of those houses had amassed. “O Solon!” cries the poet Philemon, in his comedy, “*The Delphians*, which has not come down to us, “O, Solon! you became by that the benefactor of the nation, seeing in such an establishment only welfare and tranquillity for the people. It was, moreover, absolutely necessary in a city in which ebullient youth could not restrain itself from obeying the most imperious laws of nature. You prevented thus very great evils and inevitable disorders by placing in certain houses, destined for this purpose, the women whom you had bought for the public needs, and who were kept by the state that they might accord their favors to whoever would consent to pay for them.” To this invocation, which first-hand acquaintance drew from the comic poet, Athenaeus adds, after Nicander, that the tax fixed by Solon was a very small one, and that the Dicteriades\* appeared to be fulfilling public functions: “The commerce which they carried on knew no rivalries or vengeance. One met at their hands no delay, disdain or refusal.” It was, undoubtedly, to Solon himself that the interior regulation of such an establishment was due; for it was for a long time administered like the other public services, and it undoubtedly had at its head, at least in the beginning, a grave magistrate.

One may suppose, with much appearance of reason, that the public women were at that time entirely separated from the civic population and from civic life; they never left their legal abode; they never showed themselves at the fetes and religious ceremonies; if a restrained tolerance permitted them to descend into

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\*Inmates of the *dicteria*.

the street, they were forced to wear a particular costume, which made them recognizable, and they were severely forbidden to enter certain places, where their presence would have caused scandal or distraction. Strangers, moreover, they would have had no rights in the city; and those who, Athenians by birth, had vowed themselves to Prostitution, lost all privileges belonging to their birth. We do not possess the laws which Solon had enacted in order to render Prostitution legal; but it is permissible to formulate thus the principal dispositions, which are sufficiently attested by many facts to be discovered here and there in the Greek writers. But the code of Solon, with regard to women of the great dicterion, supported at the expense of the republic, lost something of its severity when, less than a century after the death of the legislator, the courtezans had made an irruption from all sides into Greek society and even dared to mingle with decent women in the Agora. Hippias and Hipparchus, sons of the tyrant Pisistratus, who governed Athens five hundred and thirty years before the modern era, established public festivals which gathered the people at the same table, and in these festivals the courtezans were authorized to take their place beside the matrons; for the sons of the tyrant were less concerned with ameliorating the people than with subjecting and corrupting them. And so, to make use of the expression of Plutarch, the women came there in waves, and, as Idomeneus, a Greek historian, whose works are known to us only by fragments, says, Pisistratus, at whose instigation these orgies took place, ordered that the fields, the vineyards and the gardens be opened to all the world on the days which were consecrated to public debauchery, in order that each one might take part without going to hide himself in the mysterious dicterion of Solon.

The legislator of Athens had had two evident and imperious motives for regulating, as he had done, Prostitution: he proposed, in the first place, to shield from violence and insult the modesty of virgins and married women; finally, he had for object the turning of youth from shameful desires which dishonored and

brutalized it. Athens became the theater of all disorders; vice against nature was propagated in a frightful manner and threatened to arrest social progress. These debauchees, who were no longer men, might they be citizens? Solon wished to give them the means of satisfying the needs of their senses without surrendering to the disorders of their imagination. And so, he merely corrected a part of his compatriots; the others, without renouncing their culpable habits, contracted those of a libertinism that was more natural, though not less funereal in its effects. Solon's object was always fulfilled when the security of married women against libertines was assured. Legal Prostitution was, then, so to speak, in its infancy, and it did not include a numerous clientele; it was barely known; the public became accustomed to it only by degrees; one did not give himself to it with fury until after he had had, in a manner of speaking, some experience; and so it was the laws of Solon came to be overthrown by the necessities of public debauchery and to be successively effaced under the corruption of manners, which did not become more pure as they became more civilized. But, at least at Athens, the domestic fireside remained sacred and incorruptible; the poison of Prostitution had not penetrated there; and even while Venus Pandemos was calling her worshipers to forget all decency, even while the Piraeus was enlarging, at the gate of Athens, the domain reserved for courtezans, conjugal modesty was guarding the threshold of the citizen's house, while the citizen went to offer a sacrifice to Pandemos and to sup with his friends at the house of his mistress.

The private manners of the women of Sparta, and above all of the women of Corinth, were not as regular as those of the Athenian women; and, moreover, in those two cities, Prostitution had not been subjected to special laws; it was there still free, to make use of a modern expression, and it might with impunity propagate itself under all possible forms and conditions. At Corinth, a city of commerce and of travel, pleasure was a great affair for the inhabitants and for those strangers who flowed in there from

all countries of the world; and so it had been judged best to leave entirely to the individual's will and caprice the method in which he should enjoy himself. At Sparta, city of austere and republican virtues, Prostitution could be but an accident, an almost indifferent exception. Lycurgus certainly had not thought of it. Continence and chastity among women seemed to him superfluous, if not ridiculous. The only thing he proposed to himself was to govern men and to render them braver, more robust, more warlike; as to the women, he had taken no account of them. Lycurgus, as Aristotle formally states in his *Politics* (Book II, Chapter 7), had desired to impose temperance on men and not on women; the latter, long before his time, had lived in disorder and had abandoned themselves, almost publicly, to all the excesses of debauchery (*in summa luxuria*, says the Latin version of Aristotle). Lycurgus altered nothing of this state of things; the daughters of Sparta, who received a masculine education little enough suited to their sex, mingled half naked at the exercises of the men, running, wrestling, fighting with the latter. If they married, they did not at once immerse themselves in wifely duties; they were not clad any more decently; they kept themselves at no greater distance from the company of men; but the men did not appear to perceive a difference of sex which the women were bent on obviating. A husband who had been surprised coming out of the bedroom of his wife would have blushed at being so little of a Spartan. It may be understood how, among such men, courtesans would have been perfectly useless. They did not permit themselves those distractions of the heart and senses to which the young Athenians were all too inclined. The friendship of the Spartans among themselves was but a fraternity in arms, as pure, as holy, as that of the Athenians had been depraved and dishonorable. The women of Sparta did not all accommodate themselves to this absolute abnegation of their sex and their nature; there were many, girls or women, who lent themselves readily to acts of an extreme license, and this without bringing down upon themselves the least retribution. Courte-

zans would have found no employment in a city in which married women and marriageable girls were present to compete with them. And so, it is with justice that Plato, in the first book of his *Laws*, attributes to Lycurgus the incontinence of the women of Sparta, since this legislator had not deigned to find any remedy or even to inflict a penalty.

Prostitution was, it may be seen, tolerated if not organized and regulated, in the Greek republics; it was looked upon as a necessary evil, which obviated greater ones. Athenaeus, then, might say (Book XIII, Chapter 6): "Many persons who have had a part in the public government have spoken of courtezans, some blaming and others praising these women." It was not a shame for a citizen, however lofty he may have been by rank or character, to frequent courtezans, even before the age of Pericles, during which time this species of woman reigned, so to speak, over Greece. Even the relations which were to be had with them were not frowned upon. A Latin comic poet, in painting the manners of Athens, was almost authorized when he declared clearly that a young man ought to frequent houses of ill fame in order to complete his education: *non est flagitium scortari hominem adolescentulum.*

The comic poets, however, like the philosophers, felt a moral mission to punish debauchery by making it blush upon occasion; their epigrams alone placed a bridle on the license of manners, which they surveyed where the law was at fault or preserved silence. "A courtezan is the scourge of the one who keeps her!" cried the *Countryman* of Aristophanes. ". . . If anyone has ever loved a courtezan," says Anaxilas loftily, in his *Neottis*, "let him name for me a being who is more perverse."

The law, nevertheless, was not always mute or impotent against women of an evil way of life, whether they were hetairai, flute-players or dieteriades; not only did it impitibly refuse to them all the rights of a woman citizen, but it also set limits to their conduct. The Areopagus of Athens sometimes opened its eyes to the conduct of these women, and it often struck at them with

pitiless rigor. It appears, from a number of passages in Alciphron, that there was a certain solidarity among them in the presence of the law, and that a condemnation which attached to one of them had unpleasant consequences for each of her kind. It may be presumed that we have to do here with a proportional impost, applicable to every woman who had no right to the title of citizen. They were compelled also, from time to time, to render to the coffers of the State what they had taken from those of the citizens. This singular legislation gave rise to a paradox, which we give here for what it is worth. According to certain scholars, the courtezans of Athens had formed a corporation, a college, which was composed of various orders of women occupied in the same trade and classified hierarchically under the statutes or rules relative to their contemptible industry. It was in this manner that the Areopagus might render the entire body responsible for the faults of its members. This tribunal would pass on the case when a courtezan had provoked a citizen to commit a reprehensive action, and even when her influence was looked upon as prejudicial to young people, to the point of making them dissipate their fortunes or turn from the service of the republic, or when she had given them lessons in impiety. The accusations sometimes carried capital penalties, and nothing more than the hatred or the vengeance of a disdained lover was necessary to raise a terrible storm against a woman who had no appeal, and who could be condemned without any opportunities to defend herself. "Try to demand something of Euthias in exchange for that which you give him," wrote the amiable Bacchis to her friend Myrrhine, "and you will see if you are not accused of having fired the fleet or undermined the foundations of the State!" It was this rascally Euthias who accused of impiety the beautiful Phryne; but the advocate Hyperides did not fear to undertake the defense of this courtezan, who paid him well for getting her off. "Thank the gods!" Bacchis naïvely wrote him, at the end of this remarkable suit, "our profits are legitimate after the outcome of this unjust proceeding. You have acquired the most sacred

rights to the recognition of all courtezans. If you will consent to publish the harangue which you pronounced on behalf of Phryne, we will engage to have erected to you, at our expense, a statue of gold in that place in Greece which you shall choose.” History does not say whether Hyperides published his harangue, or whether the courtezans assessed themselves in order to erect a golden statue to him in some temple of Venus Pandemos or of Venus Peribasia. An accusation against one courtezan thus struck terror into the group to which the accused belonged; for this accusation did not end with acquittal. An old courtezan named Theocris, who also dabbled in magic and amorous philtres, was condemned to death on the denunciation of Demosthenes for having counselled slaves to deceive their masters and for having procured for them the means of doing so. This Theocris was, moreover, attached as a priestess to a temple of Venus. It was on the occasion of the suit of Phryne that Bacchis in these terms turned upon herself: “If, for not having obtained from our lovers the silver for which we asked them, if, for having accorded our favors to those who pay for them generously, if by this we have become guilty of impiety towards the gods, then we must renounce all the advantages of our profession and make no more commerce of our charms.”

The accusation of impiety was a most frequent one against courtezans; and this accusation was even more redoubtable in that it rested upon facts vague and easy to misrepresent. The courtezans fulfilled the functions of priestesses in certain temples and at certain fetes; nevertheless, their presence in a temple might be considered as an act of impiety. “It is not permitted,” says Demosthenes, in his plea against Neera, “it is not permitted a woman with whom one has found an adulterer to enter our temples, even though our laws do permit a strange woman and a slave to enter them in order to view them or to pray in them. Women taken in adultery are the only ones to whom entrance to the temples are forbidden.” Before Demosthenes, the orator Isaeus, who was the master of the great orator, had made a plea

on the same subject and had solemnly declared that a common woman, who was at the service of all the world and who led a life of debauchery, could not, without impiety, be brought into a temple or assist at the secret mysteries of the cult. These unfortunate women thus found themselves exposed unceasingly to judicial prosecutions under pretext of impiety; they were, so to speak, beyond the law; and the Areopagus, before whom they were slandered by their powerful enemies, had no more scruple in condemning them than in absolving them. A decree of the Areopagus had forbidden prostitutes and slaves to bear surnames taken from the solemn games; and yet, there was at Athens an *hetaira* who called herself *Nemea*, because her lover had been distinguished in the Nemean games, and perhaps, also, because she had placed herself under the auspices of Hercules. The Areopagus let her alone and did not dispute her name, which was one of good augury. Another decree of the Areopagus likewise had forbidden courtesans to celebrate the fetes of the gods at the same time as free women or citizens. However, at the festivals of Aphrodite, as Atheneus reports, on the testimony of the poet, Alexis, free women and courtesans mingled indiscriminately at table, at the public festivals which were given in honor of Venus. Thus, impiety was always and everywhere on the heels of courtesans, who escaped these snares only by good fortune rather than by cleverness. This difficult situation, imposed upon them as a penalty for being their own mistresses, explains the number and the richness of the offering which they consecrated to the gods in order to obtain the protection of the latter.

The law spared no humiliation to courtesans. Children who were born to them, the same as the sons of concubines, participated in their ignominy; it was a stain of which one could be washed free only after having gloriously served the State. The personal condition of concubines differed essentially from that of courtesans, but the condition of the children of one and the other class was always very nearly identical. Bastards, no matter who their mother was (and the number of bastards was con-

siderable at Athens, by reason of the number of courtezan), the bastards found themselves cut off in effect from the free population; they had no special costume or distinctive marks, but, in their infancy, they played and took their exercise apart, upon a tract of land adjoining the temple of Hercules, who was regarded as the god of bastardy. When they reached the age of a man, they were not able to inherit property; they had not the right to speak before the people, they might not become citizens. Finally, the bastards of courtezans (Plutarch mentions this fact in his *Life of Solon*), as a crowning mark of infamy, were not obliged to provide for their parents; the son was bound to no filial duty toward his father and mother, since these had been equally lacking in paternal and maternal duty with regard to him. This is the reason why the greater number of *filles* exposed their new-born children in the street and thus consigned them to a fate which was less unkind. These expositions of children were so much a matter of course that, in the *Dialogues of Courtezans*, Lucian makes quite an honorable exception in favor of one of his heroines, who says to her companion: "I must bring up a child, for I do not believe that I would expose one to whom I had given birth." While Euclid was archon, the orator Aristophon caused to be promulgated a law which declared a bastard anyone who could not prove that he had been born of a citizen or a free woman. And so, jesting about this excess of rigor towards bastards, the comic poet Calliades puts them on the stage and even represents himself as a son of the courtezan, Chloris.

Solon, in regulating Prostitution, had imposed upon it salutary restraints and had proposed to hold at a distance the miserable artizans of debauchery, who would have created an infamous industry by corrupting girls and boys. He made, then, a law, called the law of Prostitution, which is not known to us except through the citation which Aeschines makes of it in one of his discourses: "Whoever shall become a procurer for a young man or woman belonging to the free class shall be punished with the extreme penalty." But this law was soon softened, and pallia-

tives were invented which deprived it of its true character; until the pain of death came to be replaced by a fine of twenty drachmas, while the fine was a hundred for theft or the rape of a free woman. The capital punishment was preserved only in the text of the law, and Plutarch even affirms that depraved women, who openly made a trade of procuring mistresses for debauchees, were not included in the category of guilty ones whom this law was designed to affect. It was in vain that Aeschines demanded the application of a law which had never been wholly enforced. It was very difficult, as a matter of fact, to fix the limit at which the crime began which this terrible law had been made to deal with, for usage in Greece authorized a lover to abduct his mistress, provided she consented to it and the parents placed no obstacle in his path. It was sufficient, then, to have in advance the agreement of the father and mother of a girl whom one wished to possess; one warned them of the day on which the abduction was to take place, and they made but a show or resistance. When a young girl or her mother had received a present from a man, this girl was no longer considered a virgin, even though her virginity may have been intact; she was no longer shown the same regard or the same respect, as though she already had begun to be a prostitute.

The Areopagus, which passed judgment on courtesans and their odious parasites, when the crime had been denounced by the voice of the people or by some citizen, did not deign to occupy itself with simple infractions of the law which that impure population, devoted to bad manners and subject to the rigorous prescriptions of the police, might commit. Cognizance of infractions resulting from the exercise of Prostitution belonged undoubtedly to subordinate tribunals of the police. It was the latter who saw to it that the rules relative to the habits which prostitutes must wear were observed, that the latter kept to the proper places in their promenades, paid the impost on their shameful trade and, in short, observed all the usages which were conducive to public life.



## CHAPTER VI.

THE courtesans of Athens formed a number of classes, so distinct among themselves that the laws which governed them varied of necessity according to the different categories of these women of pleasure. There were three principal classes, which were themselves subdivided into a number of more or less homogeneous species: the *Dicteriades*, the *Auletrides*, and the *Hetairai*.\* The first were, in a manner, the slaves of Prostitution; the second were its auxiliaries; the third were its queens. There were the dicteriades, whom Solon collected in public houses of debauchery where they belonged, in consideration of the payment of a revenue fixed by the legislator, to whomsoever entered these houses, which were called dicterions in memory of Pasiphæ, wife of Minos, king of Crete (*Dictæ*), who shut herself up in the belly of a bronze cow to receive under this covering the caresses of a true bull. The auletrides, or flute-players, led a freer existence, since they went to exercise their art at the public festivals when called upon to do so; they entered the interior of the house and the private life of citizens; their music, their songs and their dances had no other object than to heat and exalt the senses of the guests, who often made these entertainers come and take a seat beside them. The hetairai were, without doubt, courtesans trafficking in their charms, abandoning themselves immodestly to those who paid, but they reserved, nevertheless, a fragment of volition; they did not sell themselves to the first comer; they had preferences and aversions; they never abnegated their free will; they belonged only to those who knew how to please them or to win their favor. Moreover, by their spirit, their edu-

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\*It has appeared best to retain the Greek form of this word (in place of *hetaerae*), a usage which is not without precedent: cf. Tennyson's *Lucretius: Girls, Hetairai, curious in their art.*

tion and their exquisite politeness, they were often fitted to take their place as equals beside the most eminent men of Greece.

These three classes of courtezans would have found not the least affinity among themselves without the single aim for which they had been instituted: they all three served to satisfy the sensual appetites of the Athenians, from the most illustrious down to the very lowest. There were degrees of Prostitution, as there were among the people, and the proud hetairai of the *Ceramicus* differed as much from the vile dicteriades of the Pireus as the brilliant Alcibiades differed from a gross leather merchant. If the documents concerning the legislation on Athenian debauchery are but rare and imperfect, we can still supplement them, in thought, by comparing the diverse conditions of the women who made a trade and merchandise of their bodies. The hetairai, those rich and puissant sovereigns, who included in their clientele the generals of armies, magistrates, poets and philosophers, were answerable only to the Areopagus, but the auletrides and the dicteriades were more ordinarily referred to subordinate tribunals; these last, subjected to a sort of infamous servitude, still had preserved the right to have judges beyond the confines of their obscene prison. The greater part of the dicteriades and the auletrides were foreign women; the greater part were of obscure and servile birth; in any case, an Athenian woman who, through misery, vice or folly, fell into this abject class of prostitutes, thereby renounced her name, her rank, her country. On the other hand, the Greek hetairai, who was not subjected to the same branding, was often obstinate in preserving her title of citizen, and it required nothing less than a writ from the Areopagus to procure her arrest. Demosthenes, pleading against the courtezan, Neera, cried out with indignation: "A woman who gives herself to men, who follows everywhere those who pay, of what is such a woman not capable? Must she not lend herself to all the tastes of those to whom she abandons herself? Such a woman, recognized, publicly and generally, over all the earth, as being a prostitute, will you assert that she is a citizen?"

It appeared that all the courtezans, whatever their condition, were considered as devoted to a public service and as being absolutely dependent upon the people; for they might not leave the territory of the republic without having asked and obtained a permission which the archons often only accorded them upon guarantees that would assure their return. In certain circumstances the college of courtezans was declared useful and necessary to the State. Indeed, these courtezans soon had so multiplied at Athens and throughout Attica that the annual impost which each one paid represented a considerable revenue. This special impost (*pornicontelos*) which the orator Aeschines tells us is very ancient, though he does not attribute its establishment to Solon, was placed each year in the hands of speculators who undertook to collect it. By paying this tax, the courtezans purchased the right to public tolerance and protection. It might be thought that an impost of this nature would at once wound the decent and modest susceptibilities of virtuous citizens; but the latter ended by becoming accustomed to it, and the city administration did not blush at having frequent recourse to this shameful source of credit. As to the collectors of the tax, they overlooked nothing that would make it as large as possible. It may be supposed, therefore, that they invented a number of sumptuary ordinances, which would have the effect of increasing fines and creating new ones. The courtezans and the collectors of the *pornicontelos* were always at war; the vexations inflicted by the latter seemed to grow in the degree to which the former became more submissive and resigned; and every year, Prostitution and the product of the tax grew in equal proportions.

Athenaeus says, positively, that the public women, probably the dictieriades, could not leave their habitations until after sunset, an hour at which a matron would not have dared show herself in the streets without exposing her reputation. But one should not take literally this passage of Athenaeus, for all the courtezans who dwelt on the Piraeus, beyond the walls of the city, promenaded night and morning on the wharves. It is possible these

women were not admitted to the city (to make purchases and not to prostitute themselves) except at the end of day, when the shades of night would cover them with a decent veil. In any case, they might not pass the night in the interior of the city, and they ran the risk of a penalty in case they were found there after a certain hour. It was likewise forbidden them to commit an act of debauchery in the neighborhood of the dwellings of peaceful citizens. This custom existed in the cities of the Orient from the highest antiquity, and it was retained at Athens, where the Areopagus strove to impose limits on legal Prostitution. The part of the Piraeus had been assigned as the domain for this Prostitution. It formed a sort of city, composed of fishermen's cabins, shops of merchants, hostleries, houses of Prostitution and little houses of pleasure. The floating population of this suburb of Athens included strangers, libertines, gamblers and vagabonds; and this was, for the courtezans, an ardent and lucrative clientele. The latter dwelt here, among their ordinary customers, and had no cause to go seek adventures in the city under the austere eyes of magistrates and matrons; they were marvelously well off at the Piraeus, and they grew rich there, off all the countries in the world. This affluence, detrimental to the interests of all, changed for some of them the theatre of their promenades; the proudest and most triumphant came to Athens to show themselves upon the Ceramicus.

The Ceramicus, of which the hetairai made use upon leaving the Piraeus to the flute-players and the dictieriades, was not that beautiful quarter of Athens which drew its name from Ceramus, son of Bacchus and of Ariadne. It was a suburb which included the garden of the Academy and the sepulchres of those citizens who had died in battle. It extended the length of the surrounding wall, from the gate of the Ceramicus to the Dipylon; there thickets of green trees and porticoes adorned with statues and inscriptions presented a cool shelter against the heat of the day. The courtezans of the first rank came to promenade and to sit in this place, which they appropriated to themselves, as though they had

conquered it from the illustrious dead who reposed beneath them. This was soon the open market of elegant Prostitution. One went there to seek fortune or to begin liaisons. One gave rendezvous there and carried on love affairs. When a young Athenian had marked a certain *hetaira* whose favors he wanted, he wrote upon the wall of the Ceramicus the name of this beauty, adding certain flattering epithets; Lucian, Alciphron and Aristophanes make allusion to this singular usage. The courtezan sent her slave to see the names which had been written up in the morning, and when she found her own, she had but to take her place in front of the inscription in order to announce that she was disposed to take a lover. The latter had but to show himself and to make his terms, which were not always accepted, for the *hetairai* in vogue did not all have the same tariff, and they also permitted themselves caprices. And so, many declarations of love ended only in the confusion of those who had addressed them. It is easy to understand how the courtezans, by their refusal or their disdain, made many implacable enemies.

The dicteriades and the flute-players, as well as the *hetairai* of the last class, seeing that the most advantageous gallantries were carried on at the Ceramicus, took the risk of coming there, or at least of approaching the place; they quitted, successively, the port of the Piraeus, that of Phalerum, the burrough of Sciron and the outskirts of Athens to dispute the place with the *hetairai* of the aristocracy, who in turn recoiled and ended by seeking refuge in the city. The laws which forbade them to appear in courtezan's costume were in fact, abolished, since they ceased to be enforced. One might see, then, the most contemptible prostitutes cluttering the approaches to the Dipylon and there tranquilly carrying on their odious commerce. The shade of the Ceramicus and the lawns which surrounded the tombs were only too favorable to the practice of Prostitution, which had taken over this glorious cemetery! "It is at the gate of the Ceramicus," says Hesychius, "that the courtezans keep shop." Lucian is equally explicit: "At the end of the Ceramicus," he says, "to the right

of the Dipylon, is the great market of *hetairai*." There was buying and selling at every price, and sometimes the merchandise was delivered on the spot, in the shadow of some monument, erected to a great citizen who had died on the field of battle. In the evening, by favor of darkness, the earth, naked or covered with grass, offered a permanent arena to the ignoble traffic in debauchery, and sometimes a belated passer-by, who on a moonless night happened to be crossing the Ceramicus and hastening his steps through the garden of the Academy, must have believed it was the manes of the dead groaning around these profaned tombs.

The invasion of the Ceramicus by the public women had by no means depopulated the Piraeus; there still remained a great number of these women in that vast suburb, which recruited its inhabitants from among the voyagers and merchants of all parts of the known world. It was the same at the port of Phalerum and the hill of Sciron, where there came in a stream as many courtezans as strangers. Their principal center was a great place which opened on a part of the Piraeus and which overlooked the citadel. This place, surrounded by porticoes, under which were to be seen only dice-players, sleepers and awakened philosophers, became filled, toward nightfall, with a throng of women, almost all foreigners, some veiled, others half naked, who, upright and immobile, or seated, coming and going, silent or flirtatious, obscene or reserved, made appeal to the desires of the passers-by. The temple of Venus Pandemos, erected on this spot by Solon, seemed to preside over this species of commerce, which was carried on openly. When the courtezan wished to overcome resistance, obtain a higher price or earnest-money, she would invoke Venus under the name of Pytho, although this Pytho was a goddess wholly distinct from Venus in the Greek mythology; they confounded one with the other, as though to express the fact that persuasion was inseparable from love. For the rest, one might see, in the sanctuary of the temple, the shining marble statues of the two goddesses, which had been placed there in the midst of their

amorous empire. Many contracts which Venus and her companion had witnessed were afterwards carried out under the portico of the temple or on the shore of the sea, or, it may be, at the foot of that long wall constructed by Themistocles to join the Piraeus to the city of Athens.

The reputation of the Piraeus was so well-established in the manners of Prostitution and of hetairism that Themistocles, the son of a courtezan, advertized his birth without shame by promenading from the Piraeus to the Ceramicus in a magnificent chariot, drawn by four hetairai in the guise of horses. Athenaeus reports this incredible fact upon the testimony of Idomeneus, who doubted it himself. A number of commentators have seen, in this passage cited by Athenaeus, not a quadriga of courtezans, but courtezans seated in a quadriga by the side of Themistocles. We shall hesitate, therefore, to hold, against Athenaeus, that this was a singular means which Themistocles had imagined of yoking courtezans to his chariot. Besides the debauches in the open air, there were at the Piraeus others which took place behind closed doors. The great dicterion, founded by Solon near the sanctuary of Pandemos, had soon proved insufficient to the needs of a corrupt age. A multitude of others had been established, without any legal violation, under the auspices of the fiscal law protecting the entrepreneur of Prostitution. The dicterions which were to be encountered at every step in the streets of the Piraeus and the other suburbs, were to be recognized by their sign, which was everywhere the same, and which differed only in its dimensions; it was always the obscene attribute of Priapus which characterized these evil places. And so, it was not possible to enter without avowing openly what one was seeking. A Greek philosopher perceived a young man creeping into one of these resorts; he called him by name; the young man dropped his head blushingly: "Courage!" the philosopher cried to him, "your blushes are the beginnings of virtue." Besides the public houses, there were particular houses where the hetairai were to be rented for purposes of their trade; they did not remain con-

stantly, but merely passed a few days and a few nights with their friends. There was nothing but feasting, dancing and music in these voluptuous retreats, which one might not enter without paying. Alciphron has preserved a letter of Panope written to her husband Euthybulus: "Your lightness, your inconstancy, your taste for pleasure leads you to neglect me as well as your children, to give yourself over entirely to that passion inspired in you by Galene, daughter of a fisherman, who came here from Hermione to rent a house and sell her charms at the Piraeus, where she makes commerce of them to the great detriment of all our poor youth; mariners go to commit debauchery with her, they crush her with presents, and she refuses none: she is a gulf which absorbs everything."

The police of manners, which had circumscribed, in certain quarters, the scandalous commerce of prostitutes, had inflicted on these prostitutes as on slaves the shame of certain vestments, destined to make them recognizable everywhere. This sumptuary law of Prostitution appears to have existed in all the cities of Greece and its colonies; but if certain colors had come to signify, in a certain manner, the public defiance of the women who wore them, these colors were not the same at Athens, at Sparta, at Syracuse and elsewhere. It was, probably, Solon who first assigned a characteristic costume to the slaves whom he devoted to Prostitution. This costume was probably made up of brilliant colors, for the women whom the legislator had brought from the Orient for the use of the republic first showed themselves clad in their national habit composed of woollen stuffs or various-colored silk. The law of Solon was, therefore, but the sanction of an ancient custom, and the Areopagus in formulating this law, declared that the courtesans should wear in the future a *flowery* costume. From this came many variations in the costume, which each proceeded to modify in her own manner, interpreting the text of the law to suit herself. According to some, they must not appear in public except with crowns and garlands of flowers; according to others, they must wear painted flowers on their vestments; some-

times they were content with accoutrements streaked with lively colors; sometimes they went clad in purple and gold, resembling baskets of blooming flowers. But the sumptuary law introduced order into this unbridled display; it forbade them to take robes of a single color, to make use of precious stuffs such as scarlet, and to have jewelry of gold when they sauntered forth from their houses. The prohibition of purple robes and golden ornaments was not, however, general for the prostitutes of all the Greek cities; for at Syracuse, the decent women only might not wear vestments trimmed in purple, in striking colors or adorned with gold, which served as the sign of Prostitution; at Sparta, similar prohibitions were enforced for good women: "I praise the ancient city of the Lacedaemonians," says St. Clement of Alexandria (*Paedagog.*, Book II, Chapter 10), "which permits courtesans flowery habits and golden jewelry, while forbidding to married women this luxury of the toilet, which it reserves for courtesans alone." Athenaeus reproduces a passage of Philarchus, who, in the twenty-fifth book of his *Histories*, approves a similar law which existed among the Syracusans: variations of color, bands of purple and ornaments of gold, composed the obligatory costume for Syracusan hetairai.

We see, moreover, from the highest antiquity, the lecheresses of the Bible adorning themselves with flowers and brilliant stuffs; Solon, then, had done nothing but conform to the manners of the Orient by prescribing that prostitutes should not quit their Oriental costume. Zaleucus, the legislator of the Locrians, did but follow the system of Solon, when he likewise imposed on the prostitutes of his Greek colony the stigmata of flowery costumes, as Diodorus of Sicily reports. Zaleucus, the disciple of Pythagoras, was little enough indulgent toward sensual passions, and if he tolerated Prostitution by branding it, it was in order not to leave an excuse for adultery, which he punished by tearing out the eyes of the guilty one. Suidas, in his Lexicon, speaks of *flowering courtesans*, that is to say, in accordance with the explanation which he himself gives, "wearing flowery robes, varie-

gated, painted with diverse colors, for a law existed at Athens ordering prostitutes to wear flowery vestments, adorned with flowers or with various colors, so that this adornment might designate courtezans at the first glance of the eye." It seems probable that the courtezans of Athens showed themselves crowned with roses, since crowns of gold had been denied them under pain of fine. "If an hetaira," says the rhetorician Hermogenes, in his Rhetoric, "wears golden jewelry, these jewels shall be confiscated for the profit of the republic." In the same manner crowns of gold and gilded habits which a prostitute might dare to wear publicly were subject to confiscation. A law of Philip of Macedon inflicted a fine of one thousand drachmas, about one thousand francs in our money, on a courtezan who should assume the airs of a princess by crowning herself with gold. These sumptuary laws were, doubtless, but rarely in force, and the rich hetairai, who were like the queens of learned and lettered Greece, had, certainly, nothing to fear from these regulations of the police, to which the dictieriades found themselves rigorously subjected.

The ordinary costume of Athenian women of distinction differed essentially from that of foreign women of an evil way of life. This costume, at once elegant and decent, was composed of three pieces of clothing: the tunic, the robe, and the mantle; the tunic white, in linen or in wool, was attached with buttons over the shoulders and fastened over the breast with a large cincture, falling in undulant folds to the feet; the robe, shorter than the tunic, was fastened over the loins by a large ribbon and ended below, like the tunic, in bands or stripes of different colors and was adorned sometimes with sleeves which covered only a part of the arm; the mantle of cloth, sometimes drawn back in the form of a scarf, sometimes falling over the body, seemed only made to mark the outline of the form. They employed at first, as Barthelemy, in his *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis*, informs us, precious stuffs which had the brilliancy of gold, or it may be Asiatic stuffs on which bloomed the most beautiful flowers with the most natural colors; but these stuffs were soon exclusively

reserved for the vestments with which the statues of the gods were covered, or for the habits of the theatre. Finally, to forbid to decent women the employment of these flowered stuffs, the laws ordered women of an evil way of life to make use of them. These latter had, also, the privilege of immodesty, and they might descend into the street with flowing hair, the bosom uncovered, and the rest of the body barely hidden under a veil of gauze. At Sparta, on the contrary, the courtezans must be amply clad in trailing robes, laden with ornaments of the goldsmith's art, for the costume of the Lacedaemonian women was as simple as it was light. This costume consisted of a short tunic and a narrow robe, falling to the ankles; but the young girls, who mingled in all the exercises of strength and agility which Spartan education imposed on men, were even more lightly clad; their tunic without sleeves, attached at the shoulders with clasps of metal and lifted above the knee by a cincture, was open at the bottom on each side, in such a manner that half the body remained uncovered; when these beautiful and robust girls took their exercise by wrestling, running and leaping, the most lascivious courtezans would have had no advantage over them.

Finally, one of the modes which best characterized the Greek courtezans, although this mode was not prescribed in the sumptuary laws, was the yellow color of their hair.\* They tinted it with saffron or with other plants which, from brunettes, which they ordinarily were, made them blondes. The comic poet Menander makes mockery of those blonde locks which were sometimes but false coiffures, veritable perukes, borrowed from the hair of northern races or made up of gilded strands. St. Clement of Alexandria says, in proper terms, that it is a shame for a modest woman to dye her hair and to give it a blonde color. One might deduce from this passage of St. Clement that the respectable women had imitated this coiffure, which the courtezans had adopted in order to make themselves look like the goddesses, whom poets, painters and sculptors represented with locks of

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\*“Gentlemen prefer”, etc.

gold. These refinements of the toilet demanded without doubt the services of numerous slaves, very expert in the art, although an ancient law of Athens forbade prostitutes to make use of the services of hired women or of slaves. This law, which often was not enforced, degraded a free woman who put herself on a level with the prostitute, and deprived her of the title of citizen by confiscating her as a slave for the profit of the republic. It appeared that the woman citizen, by the sole fact of service in the house of a prostitute, became a prostitute herself and might be employed in the dictatorships. But, in spite of this severe law, the courtesans never lacked servants, and these latter, young or old, were ordinarily more perverted than the prostitutes whom they assisted in their shameful industry.

## CHAPTER VII

THERE was such a social distance between the condition of a dicteriade and that of an hetaira that the first, relegated to the category of slaves, of freed and foreign women, led, in her debauched obscurity, an existence without name, while the second, although deprived of rank and the title of citizen, lived in the midst of the most eminent and the most cultured men of Greece. We may presume, then, that the writers, poets, or moralists, who composed voluminous treatises on the courtezans of their times, did not deign to occupy themselves with the dicteriades, with the exception of a few marked by the singularity of their character and their manners for the attention of those curious after an erotic anecdote. These anecdotes were the favorite form of entertainment of the libertines of Athens; and many authors were led to embody them in their works; unfortunately, there have come down to us none of those collections devoted to the history of Prostitution except the isolated shreds and scattered details which Athenaeus has included in book XIII of his *Deipnosophistai*.<sup>\*</sup> We doubtless would not have found anything in particular with reference to the dicteriades in the writings which Aristophanes, Apollodorus, Ammonius, Antiphones and Gorgias composed, in different literary genres, on the courtezans of Athens. It was the hetairai, and the most famous among them, who were charged with furnishing materials for these pornographic compilations. Callistratus had edited the *History of Courtezans* as seriously as Plutarch had his *Lives of famous men*; Macho had collected the bon mots of hetairai of renown; many comic poets had represented on the stage the disorderly doings of these women, who were gallant rather than public characters:

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\**Deipnosophistes*: dinner-sage. The *Deipnosophistai* of Athenaeus was a sort of cook-book, or gourmand's treasury.

Diocles in his *Thalatta*, Herecrates in his *Corianno*, Menander in his *Thais*, Eubulus in his *Clepsydre*. But if we still had those numerous works which Athenaeus causes us to regret, we should not be better instructed on the subject of the *dicteriades*, who succeeded one another in their hideous trade without leaving personal traces of their infamy. Those who deserve to be renowned on account of their vices and their adventures would awaken only contempt in the memory of men.

Aristophanes of Byzantium, Apollodorus and Gorgias, were able to count only a hundred and thirty-five *hetairai* who had had some reputation at Athens, and whose deeds might be worthy of being handed down to posterity; but this small number of celebrities only causes to stand out the more that multitude of women who at Athens plied the trade of Prostitution, and who were little concerned with the honor of being mentioned in history, provided they were granted the shame of acquiring a fortune. There was in Athens so great a number of courtezans, on the word of Athenaeus, that no other city, however populous it might have been, could have produced so many. Athenaeus, in generalizing thus, includes in this number the *dicteriades* as well as the *hetairai* and the flute-players. Athenaeus, however, feels the need of distinguishing between these three species of women of pleasure, and he even seems to divide the *dicteriades* into two classes, one of which becomes the lowest order of *hetairai* (*meta hetairon*), while the other peoples the houses of ill fame (*tas epi ton oide-maton*). We are disposed to conclude, from these nuances of designation, that the *dicteriades* who lent their paid assistance to the houses of debauchery, and who hired themselves out in these public establishments, were not the same as those who sold themselves on their own account and who prostituted themselves in the wine shops, in the barber shops, under the porticoes, in the fields and about the tombs. These popular Bacchantes, who were to be seen wandering of an evening in segregated places, had been nicknamed *she-wolves*, either because they went searching for prey in the darkness, like hungry wolves, or because they an-

nounced their presence and state of availability by the cries of a wild beast. This, at least, is the etymology which Dionysius of Helicarnassus regards as the most natural.

The dicteriades who were shut up were almost always foreign women, slaves who had been purchased here, there and everywhere by a speculator; the free dicteriades, on the contrary, were Greeks whom vice, idleness, or misery had caused to fall into this degree of abasement and who endeavored, with a remnant of modesty, to conceal the degrading trade by which they lived. These unhappy ones, who had nothing but chance to protect them in their sublunary amours, met in their nocturnal quests only sailors, freed men and vagabonds, who were no less despicable than themselves. It is easy to perceive that they would endeavor to hold out as long as possible against the insult of the flowery costume and the blonde peruke, which were the stigmata attaching to the name of courtezan. They had, moreover, no need of an exterior sign to summon their customers, since they did not show themselves but scurried in the shadows, where one had to grope his way to find them. It made little difference, then, so far as their commerce was concerned, whether they were young or old, ugly or beautiful, well-adorned or ill; the night covered everything, and the customer half-drunk did not demand to see more clearly. In the dicterions, on the contrary, over which a sort of municipal police supervision was exercised, nothing was refused the sight, and everything which might more particularly commend the inhabitants of the place was adopted. Xenarchus, in his *Pentathle*, and Eubulus, in his *Parnychis*, picture for us these naked women, erect and ranged in a line, in the sanctuary of debauchery, with nothing in the way of vestment except the long transparent veils which afforded the eye no obstacle. Some, by a refinement of lubricity, had the face veiled, the bosom imprisoned in a fine tissue which modeled the form, and the rest of the body uncovered. Eubulus compares them to the nymphs which Eridanus saw sporting on the pure waves. It was not at night, but by day, in the full light of the sun, that the dicterions

placed in evidence the wealth of their immodest treasuries. This exposition of nudities served as a sign to the houses of debauchery better than the painted or sculptured phallus which decorated the door; but, according to other archeologists, these voluptuous spectacles were to be seen only in the inner court.

There were, without doubt, dicterions at Athens which were more or less disorderly, especially after Prostitution had become fixed; but in the beginning, the most republican quality reigned in these establishments administered at the expense of the State. The price was uniform for all visitors, and this price was not very high. Philemon, in his *Adelphi*, makes it no higher than an obole, which was equal to three and a half cents in our money. "Solon has purchased women," says Philemon, "and has placed them in houses where, provided with all that is necessary, they have become the common property of those that want them. There they are in a state of simple nature, they will tell you: no surprise, you see everything! Are you not to be congratulated? The door opens at your will; all you need is an obole. Come on, enter, there is no standing on fashion here, no lackadaisical manners; she whom you choose will receive you in her arms when you will and as you will." Eubulus composed his Greek comedies, of which we have but fragments, 370 years before Christ, and in his time, the entry fee had not yet risen greatly in the dicterions; moreover, there was not the least risk to run, as though the foresight of Solon had joined a dispensary to his foundation: "There are beautiful girls there," says Eubulus, "whom you may purchase at your pleasure for a few crowns, and that without the least danger." (*A quibus tuto ac sine periculo licet tibi pauculis nummis voluptatem emere*; but the Latin translation does not say as much as the Greek.) We have no more precise knowledge than this with respect to the prices current in the houses of ill fame at Athens, and we presume that these prices often varied by reason of the tax which the Senate imposed on the proprietors of the dicterions. These houses, moreover, were not only frequented by sailors and merchants, whom the commercial marine of all

countries brought to the Piraeus, the most distinguished citizens, when they were drunk or when the demon of debauchery laid hold on them, did not fear to glide, their mantles over their faces, into the houses of tolerance founded by Solon. The doors of these houses remained open day and night; they were not guarded, like the others, by a dog chained in the vestibule; a curtain of wool in striking colors prevented passers-by from obtaining indiscreet glimpses of the court, surrounded by open porticoes, under which the women waited, standing, seated on couches, occupied in polishing their nails, in smoothing their hair, in rouging themselves, in removing superfluous hair, in perfuming themselves, in dissimulating their physical defects by placing in relief their secret beauties. Ordinarily, an old Thessalian woman who was somewhat of a sorceress and who sold philtres or perfumes, remained seated behind the curtain, and it was her mission to introduce visitors, after being informed of their tastes and of the offers they had to make.

It does not appear that the number of the dicterions was diminished by the laws of Solon and the Areopagus. This particular industry possessed the right of creating, at least outside the city, establishments of this sort and of organizing them for the benefit of the entrepreneur, provided the tax was exactly paid into the public treasury, and this tax might have been and, in all probability was, a fixed one and payable by the head of the dicteriades. There is nothing to lead us to suspect that it was proportional and progressive. A dicterion that was in vogue produced fine revenues for its proprietor; this latter was not necessarily a foreigner but often a citizen of Athens, who, possessed of the love of gain, devoted his money to this villainous speculation and grew rich from the products of public debauchery by exploiting, under a false name, a shop of Prostitution. The comic poets picture for the contempt of honest folk the avid and cowardly complacencies of those who rented their houses to the dicteriades; the master of such a house was called *pornobosceion*. This concurrence multiplied enterprises of the sort, and the old courtezans,

who could no longer gain anything by themselves, soon came to think of utilizing at least their experience. And so, there were strange schools, which grew up in the suburbs of Athens; in them were taught openly the arts and secrets of Prostitution, without the magistrates interfering to repress such disorderly institutions. The mistresses of these schools of impurity enrolled the unhappy ones whom they only too often had debauched, and the education which was given to these pupils explained the title of *matrons*, given with effrontery to their perverse directors. Alexis, in a comedy entitled *Isostasion*, of which Athenaeus has preserved for us a few fragments, has given us a picturesque account of the artifices which these matrons employed in the metamorphoses of their pupils: "They take into their house young girls who have not yet learned their trade, and they soon transform them to the point of changing not merely their sentiments, but even their faces and figures. If a novice is inclined to be small, they sew a thick sole of cork into her slippers. If she is too tall, they make her wear a very thin slipper and teach her to carry her head low on her shoulders, which diminishes her figure somewhat. If she is lacking in the haunches, they apply above them a bit of trimming which sets them off in such a manner that those who see her cannot refrain from exclaiming: 'My faith! but there's a pretty rump!' If she has a large belly, by means of stays, much like those contrivances which are employed in stage representations, they hold it up. If she has russet hair, they blacken it with soot; if she has black hair, they bleach it with ceruse; if she has a complexion that is too blonde, they color it with *poederote*. But if she has some particular beauty in a certain part of the body, they do all they can to heighten these natural charms. If she has pretty teeth, they force her to smile, so that spectators may perceive how pretty her mouth is; and if she does not like to smile, they keep her in the house all day with a sprig of myrtle between her lips, such as cooks ordinarily have when they sell their she-goat heads in the market-place, so that she is finally obliged to show her teeth whether she will or no."

The matrons excelled in the refinements of coquetry and of the toilet, the object of which was to awaken the desires and the curiosity of their clients; they did not limit themselves in their art to satisfying merely the eyes; they taught their pupils everything which voluptuousness had been able to invent that was most ingenious, most bizarre, and most infamous. And so, Athenaeus, who speaks, perhaps, but from hearsay, indulges in a formal eulogy of these women of pleasure in the following terms: "You will be pleased with the women who work in the dicterions." (*Tas epi ton oikenmaton aopazesthai.*)

The dicterions, whatever their nature, enjoyed the privilege of inviolability; they were considered as places of asylum, in which the citizen found himself under the protection of public hospitality. No one had the right to invade them to commit an act of violence. Debtors there found shelter from their creditors, and the law erected a sort of moral barrier between civil life and this secret one, which began at the door of the dicterion. A married woman could not enter these inviolable retreats to seek her husband; a father had not the right to go there to surprise his son. Once the guest of the dicterion had passed the threshold of this mysterious retreat, he became in a manner sacred, and he lost, for the time he was there, his individual character, his name, his personality. "The law does not permit," says Demosthenes in his plea against Neera, "that anyone be surprised in adultery with those women who are in a house of Prostitution, or who have set themselves up to carry on the same traffic in a public place." And yet, the prostitutes were foreign women, slaves and freed-women; it was not, therefore, they whom the law spared and appeared to respect, it was the citizens who came to them, by virtue of a tacit contract under safeguard of the law, to accomplish an act for which they had to answer only to themselves. It is permissible to suppose that pleasure in Greece was a part of religion and its cult; this was why Solon had placed the temple of Venus Pandemos beside the dicterion, so that the goddess might be able to survey, at once, what was passing in the one place and in the

other. In accordance with the ideas of the fervent worshipers of Venus, man was sacred to her, as soon as he gave himself to the practices of her cult, which was the same in the temple as in the dicterions.

The ancient authors furnish us with many details regarding the dicteriades who were not shut up in houses and the subordinate hetairai who practiced a vagabond Prostitution, or who set themselves up audaciously in their own dwellings. Not only do we know what were the very prices of their favors, their ordinary habits in their amours, the various phases of their dissolute existence, but we even know their nicknames and the origin of those names, which characterized, with too great a degree of liberty, it may be, their intimate manners. The wages of the free dicteriades and of hetairai of the lower order were not at all fixed or even graduated according to the beauty and the merits of each. This wage was not always paid in silver or gold coin; it even more often took the form of a present, which the prostitute demanded before giving herself, and sometimes after she had given herself. Hence came the importance of the wage which established, first of all, the rank which the courtezan held in the corporation of the hetairai; but the true distinction which these women might claim among themselves, and which the men who dealt with them ordinarily were careful to give them, was, rather, one based upon mind, talents and science. Those who lived in the wine shops, among the drunken sailors and the fishermen with shaggy breasts, were not permitted to demand large sums; some contented themselves with a basket of fish, others with an amphora of wine; they also had their caprices, and one day they would prostitute themselves gratis in honor of Venus, only to charge double on the following day. The courtezans of Lucian initiate us into all these variations of salary, which they would demand, sometimes, in an imperious tone, and which, sometimes, they would solicit with the humblest air. "Has anyone ever seen," cries with indignation one of those hetairai, "anyone take a courtezan for a whole night and give her five drachmas (about five francs) in pay!"

Another of these *hetairai*, Chericlea, was so complacent that she accorded everything and demanded nothing. Lucian declares, in his *Toxaris*, that a girl with a finer disposition was never to be seen.

When the *hetairai* of the wine shops on the Piraeus wished to please in order to get a present, they would put on the most caressing airs, assume the most honeyed tone and the most teasing pose: "Are you an old man?" says Xenarchos, in his *Pentathle*, cited by Athenaeus, "they will call you *papa*; are you young? they will call you *little brother*." One should see the counsels which the old courtezan gives to her daughter in Lucian: "You are faithful to Chereas and you receive no other man; you have refused two minae from the laborer of Acharnes, one mina from Antiphon," etc. Now a mina represented one hundred francs in our money,\* and one does not know whether to be more astonished at the generosity of the laborer of Acharnes or at the fidelity of this *hetaira* to her lover Chereas. Macho, who collected with care the bon mots of courtezans, tells us that Moerichus did business with Phryne of Thespia, who ended by being content with a mina, that is to say, with a hundred francs: "It is a good deal!" Moerichus says to her; "these last days you have taken in only two staters in gold (about forty francs)† from a stranger?" . . . "Well enough!" is Phryne's lively response, "wait till I am in a good humor, and I shall not ask you for any more." Gorgias, in his work on the courtezans of Athens, had mentioned a *hetaira* of the lowest order, named *Lemen*, that is to say, the Bleary-Eyed, who was a mistress of the orator Ithatocles, but who, nevertheless, prostituted herself to all comers for two drachmas, about forty cents at the present time, which won for her the surnames *Didrachma* and *Panorama*. Finally, if one is to believe Athenaeus, Lais, having become an old woman and being forced to continue her trade by modifying the price of her used charms, no longer received more than one stater in gold, or twenty francs,‡ from

\*Fourteen dollars in American currency.

†Eleven dollars.

‡Five dollars and fifty cents.

those rare visitors who desired to see to what point of degredation a once beauteous and celebrated hetaira had fallen. This was, in general, the destiny of courtezans; after being elevated to the highest rung of fortune and that reputation which an hetaira might acquire, after having seen at their feet poets, generals and even kings, they descended rapidly the ladder of this factitious prosperity, and they ended, old and despised, in abandonment and oblivion. The dicterion then opened as a refuge to these ruins of beauty and of love. It was thus that Glycere ended, who had been loved by the poet Menander. Happy those who had amassed enough to assure them of an independent and tranquil old age, happy those who, like Scione, Hippaphesis, Theoclea, Psamothe, Lagispe, Anthea, and Philyre, renounced the trade of an hetaira before their trade had said adieu to them! Lysias, in his oration against Lais, warmly congratulates these hetairai, who were yet young, on their attempt to become respectable women.

The courtezans who were not placed on sale in the dicterions, frequently obtained so much money for their services, even from fishermen and merchants, that these poor victims allowed themselves to be entirely despoiled, only to see themselves replaced by others, who were themselves soon to be replaced by others still. "You have forgotten," sorrowfully wrote the villager, Anicetus, to the avaricious Phebiane, who had become enriched at his expense, and who no longer deigned to give him so much as a look, "you have forgotten the baskets of figs, the fresh cheeses, the fine chickens which I sent you? All the ease that you enjoy, are you not indebted for it to me? But for me there is left only shame and misery." Alciphron, who has preserved for us this letter as a monument to the bitter cupidity of the courtezans, shows us also the fisherman, Thalasserus, in love with a singer and sending the latter every day the fish which he has caught. Athenaeus cites the verses of Anaxilas, who, in *Neottis*, had created a frightful portrait of the courtezans of his time: "Yes, all these hetairai are such sphinxes that, far from talking openly, they only speak

in enigmas; they caress you, they talk to you of love, or the pleasure which you give them; but in the end, they say to you: ‘My dear, I need a footstool, a tripod, a table with four legs, a little servant maid with two feet.’ He who understands all this may spare himself these details, like an Oedipus, and may esteem himself happy indeed to have been, perhaps, the only one to escape shipwreck in spite of her; but he who hopes for a true return on what he pays soon finds that he is the prey of a monster.” This passage from a Greek poem, which like so many others has disappeared, has caused the commentator to believe that the nickname of *Sphinx*, which designated the hetairai in general, had been applied to them on account of their enigmatic requests; but this name came to them rather from their stations in the public places and at the crossroads, where they sat on their haunches like sphinxes, wrapped in the folds of their veils, immobile and, ordinarily, silent. However this may be, the sphinx, according to the remark of Panciroles, was the emblem of the daughters of joy.

As to the particular nicknames of the courtezans, they presented less ambiguity; and, moreover, to understand them, one had but to recall the circumstances which led to them. These nicknames were rarely flattering to those who bore them. Thus, the seductive Synope was not yet decrepit when she was called *Abydos* or the *Abyss*; Phanostrate, who had never had, according to Appolodorus of Byzantium, a very distinguished clientele, abandoned herself insensibly to such an excess of filthiness that she was surnamed *Phtheropyle*, because she was often seen seated in the street, in her off moments, occupied in destroying the vermin which devoured her. These two dicteriades, the one by her lice, the other by the none too engaging promises which her sobriquet held out, had won for themselves a popularity which brought many curious ones to see them, and which led Demosthenes to cite them in his tribunal oration. Antiphanes, Alexis, Callicrates and other writers did not disdain to speak also of the *Abyss* and of the *Lousy One*. These were two well-known types,

at least at a distance, which completed a collection of hetairai of the vilest sort. In this collection figured the *Botcher*, the *Fisher Woman*, and the *Pullet*; this last one cackled like a pullet waiting for the cock; the *Fisher Woman* lay in wait for passers-by and fished for them with a hook, as it were; the third had neglected, so to speak, to mend the woof of her old amours. Antiphanes, who set down in his book the various characteristics of these dictieriades, speaks also of the *Arcadian* and the *Gardener* whom we do not take to have been women. Athenaeus speaks also of the *Drunkard*, who was always full of wine, and who could never drink enough. Syneris had been nicknamed the *Lantern*, because she smelled of oil; Theoclea had been named the *Crow* because she was black; Callysto, her daughter, had been named the *Sow* because she was always squealing; Nico had been named the *Nanny-goat* because she had ruined a certain Thallus who loved her as briskly as a nanny-goat munches the boughs of an olive tree (*Mallus*); the *Water Clock*, whose true name is not known, had been so called for the reason that she gave each visitor only enough time to empty his clock of sand, a quarter of an hour according to certain commentators, an hour according to most of them. Eubulus had made a comedy on this subject, about this young woman who knew so well the price of time.

Athenaeus, who drew with full hands from a hoard of books which we no longer possess, describes by their nicknames many dictieriades whose whole history is limited to these sometimes ambiguous soubriquets. He enumerates, with all the phlegm of a scholar who has no fear of exhausting his material, the names furnished him by his authorities, Timocles, Menander, Polemon and all the Greek pornographers. There is Nourrice, the daughter of Nanno, who entertained her lovers; there were the *Aphies*, who were the two sisters, Anthis and Stragonion, remarkable for their blonde complexion, their slender figures and their large eyes, which had won for them the name of fish (*aphue*); there was the *Cistern*, who fell one day into a vat of wine; "The world is coming to an end!" cried the hetaira Glycera, celebrated for her

bon mots; "look, the Cistern is in a vat!" Athenaeus and Lucian cite a number of hetairai of a lower order who were designated only by their nicknames: Astra, or the *Star*; Cymbalium, or the *Cymbal*; Conallis, or the *Bearded One*; Cerceope, or the *Train-Bearer*; Lyra, or the *Lyre*; Nikion, or the *Patch*; Gnomea, or the *Sentence*; Iscave, or the *Fig*; Ischas, or the *Bark*; Lampyris, or the *Gleaming Moth*; Lyia, or the *Prey*; Melissa, or the *Bee*; Neuris, or the *Catgut*; Demonasse, or the *Woman of the People*; Crocalle, or the *Grain of Sand*; Dorcas, or the *Hind*; Crobyle, or the *Hair-Buckle*, etc. A number of dictieriades had soubriquets which explain themselves: the *Chimaera*, the *Gorgon*, etc.; others, such as Doris, Euphrosyne, Myrtale, Lysidis, Evardis, Corinne, etc., escaped the honor of a descriptive name.

But, ordinarily, the nickname was connected with an epigram more or less biting, more or less flattering, and better established than if it had been engraved on marble or on bronze; the epigram passed from mouth to mouth, and with it the nickname which it left as an indelible imprint on the girl who had deserved it. And so, the poet, Ammonides, found cause to lament over a certain dicteriade: "If she should come to show herself naked, you would flee to the other side of the columns of Hercules"; and another poet added, "her father was the first one to flee." And so she was nicknamed *Antipatra*. A couple of others had the singular habit of defending themselves and desiring to be taken by assault, as if to conceal from themselves the shame of their traffic. Timocles was surprised to encounter resistance in a public woman, and so he nicknamed these the *Virgin* (poriske) and the *Thrasher* (from *Rameo*, I forge, and *type*, blow); and he consecrated to them these verses: "Indeed, it is to elevate oneself to the rank of the gods to pass a night at the side of Poriske or of *Cametype*. What firm white flesh! What a soft skin! What breath! What a charm in their resistance! They struggle against their vanquisher, and he is forced to ravish their favors; you are slapped in the face, struck by a charming hand. . . . O what delight!"



## CHAPTER VIII

THE true dicteriades of Athens were less dangerous to youth, and even to old age, than the subordinate hetairai, for nothing could equal the avidity and the avarice of these sordid beings, who seemed to have no other occupation than that of ruining inexperienced young people and senseless old men. Solon evidently had desired to place a bridle on the rapacity of the decent courtezans by creating the institution of courtezan-slave; he believed that he had done much for manners by such an institution as this, which spared, at once, the time and the purse of citizens. But these dicteriades were poor captives, purchased outside of Greece and assembled from all countries under the regime of a uniform legislation of pleasures; they had, frequently, not the least notion of Greek customs; they knew nothing of the city founded by Minerva, in which they exercised their shameful profession; they did not even speak the language of this city, to which they had been brought as foreign merchandise; their beauty and the more or less clever employment which they knew how to make of it was not a sufficient attraction for the Athenians, who, even in the affairs of pleasure, liked to have their minds satisfied, or at least equally excited with their physical senses. The hetairai of an inferior order could not fail, therefore, to find at Athens more lovers and, above all, more habitués than the slaves of the dicterions. These hetairai, coming, for the most part, from the people, and early depraved by the detestable counsels of their mothers or their nurses, were rarely as beautiful and as well-built as the dicteriades, but they had natural resources of mind, and even their perversity assumed piquant, ingenious, mobile and diverting forms. And so, they found little difficulty in establishing, by their conversation, an empire over the unfortunate and imprudent victims whom they had at first attracted and

charmed by means of physical pleasure. They were feared and pointed out as living rocks, and the wisest pilots, the most clever oarsmen, the most solid ships ended by striking upon these reefs; these constant shipwrecks of honor, or virtue and of fortune, were the glory and the amusement of the deadly sirens who had caused them. "If anyone has ever let himself be caught in the net of an *hetaira*," says the poet Anaxilas in his comedy entitled *Neottis*, "let him name for me an animal of as much ferocity. What, by comparison, is an inaccessible dragon, a chimaera who breathes fire through her nostrils, a Charybdis, a Scylla, that sea-dog with three heads, a sphinx, a hydra, a lioness, a female viper? What are those winged harpies? No, it is not possible to equal the wickedness of that execrable brood, for it surpasses the worst that one could imagine"; these *hetairai*, corrupted from infancy by the lessons given them by old and debauched women, preserved no human sentiment; when young, they pretended sometimes to be content with a single lover, so long as this lover could pay as much as twenty others; they afterwards abandoned themselves to as many as possible, and were only concerned with getting all they possibly could out of their constant abandonment; they advised the unfortunate wretches who had no more money with which to pay them to commit theft, fraud, and, if necessary, murder; and the latter had no alternative to giving up their mistresses or not recoiling from any crime in order to keep them. Their victims included not only the sons of well-to-do families, the heirs to great names, young orators, poets and neophyte philosophers, but the *hetairai* of the Piraeus also found a pleasure in despoiling sailors, soldiers, villagers and, above all, gamblers, who were more generous than the others, as well as merchants and the dissipated generally. But the surprising thing is that these women, whose influence was so pernicious and who enjoyed so much power and prestige, were possessed, often, of but a doubtful sort of beauty and one that had been more or less effaced, with old and decrepit charms, grimacing smiles and insipid kisses. Anaxilas draws for us a portrait unattractive enough

of the principal monsters of the hetairism of his times: "There is that Plangon," he says, "a veritable Chimaera, who destroys strangers with iron and flame, whom, however, a solitary cavalier finally beat at her own game, by running away with all the effects of her house. As to Synope, is she not a second hydra? she is old and has for neighbor Gnathene with the hundred heads! But Nannion, in what manner is she different from Scylla with the three mouths? Is she not seeking to capture a third lover after she has already strangled two? But they say he saved himself by the strength of his oars. As for Phryne, I cannot see in what manner she is different from Charybdis: has she not engulfed both the pilot and the bark? Theano, what is she but a hairless siren, with two eyes and the voice of a woman, but with the limbs of a black bird?" This passage from a Greek comedy, which Athenaeus still had under his eyes, initiates us into the degradation of the trade of hetaira, and we see taking part in that trade, on an equality with the vilest dicteriades, the famous courtesans who had been, in their time, the most sought after, the richest, the most triumphant in Greece. Plangon, Synope, Gnathene, Phryne, Theano, become old women, were no different from the she-wolves and the sphinxes of the Ceramicus.

We find proof in a hundred places that decrepitude was not looked upon as an irreparable defect in women of an evil life, either because they possessed a marvelous art in disguising the traces of age, or because they commended themselves, for purposes of public debauchery, less by their exterior advantages than by the reputations they possessed for libidinous experience. Young or old, wrinkled or not, they made up their faces with the *paederote*, a sort of rouge made from the flower of a thorny plant of Egypt or from the root of the acanthus; this vegetable rouge, diluted with vinegar, gave the yellowest skin the fresh tint of an infant; as to wrinkles, they took care to fill up those with fish-glue or the white of ceruse, so expertly that the skin became smooth and polished, taking on the brilliant hues of youth, which were traced on it with a careful brush. The rouging of the face was,

as it were, the stigma of Prostitution. "Do you pretend," writes Dryantides to his wife Chronion (in the *Letters* of Alciphron), "to place yourself on a level with those women of Athens, whose painted faces advertise their depraved manners? Rouge, the red and the white, in their hands vies with the art of the most excellent painters, so expert are they in giving themselves the tint which they believe best suited to their designs!" Inasmuch as the public hetairai did not show themselves close up except by evening, to the light of a torch or lantern, and since by day they kept themselves at a distance, semiveiled, before their door or their window, they found much profit in the singular brilliancy which cosmetics gave their skins. It was enough, moreover, that the effect was produced, and that the imprudent ones who followed their steps into the obscurity of their retreat should have been inflamed at the first glance. The narrow cell into which the courtezan conducted her prey did not permit enough light to penetrate the shadows to cause disenchantment to follow the discovery of these mysteries of the toilet. When respectable women, undoubtedly in order to compete with the hetairai for their husbands' love, had the fatal ambition to imitate the coquettish artifices of their rivals, they made an awkward enough attempt, which often turned to their confusion. "Our women," says Eubulus in his comedy of the *Flower Girls*, "do not cover the skin with white, do not paint themselves with mulberry juice as you do; if you go out in summer time, one sees two rivulets of ink flowing from your eyes, and the sweat, falling on your neck, forms a furrow of rouge; as to your hair, dropped down over your forehead, it has all the whiteness of old age, on account of the white powder with which it is covered!"

If the employment of rouge was general among the subordinate hetairai, the manner of preparing and applying it offered an infinite number of possibilities corresponding to the different degrees of a true art. It is to be supposed that the novices had themselves painted before they learned how to paint themselves. As a matter of fact, in a land in which marble statues were

painted in brilliant colors, it was only to be expected that human visages should be painted with as much verity. We may believe then that those artists called painters of courtezans (*pornographoi*), such as Pausanias, Aristides and Niophanes, cited by Athenaeus, did not limit themselves to making portraits of the hetairai and to depicting their erotic academies; they did not disdain also to paint, upon occasion, the face of a courtezan, even as they painted in the temples the statues of the gods and goddesses. According to the precepts of a Greek poet, beauty must vary unceasingly in order to be always beautiful, and so, there were continual variations of physiognomy to incite the ardors of desire. When a courtezan had learned the art of painting herself, taste and habit completed her instruction in this art, in which each piqued herself on her excellence, though all did not succeed equally. In the *Letters* of Alciphron, Thais writes to her friend, Thessala, on the subject of Megara, who of all the courtezans was most described: "She has spoken very insolently of the rouge which I use and with which I paint my face. And has she then forgotten the miserable state in which I have seen her, when she did not have even a mirror? If she knew that her own complexion is the color of sandarac, would she dare to speak of mine?" It is to be understood that, as all the hetairai were rouged, the oldest reestablished thus a sort of equality among themselves and reserved for themselves other advantages which the younger ones could acquire only by a long practise of their trade. That is why it often happened that a young and beautiful hetaira saw an old and ugly courtezan preferred to her, a preference which she could not explain, and which she attributed to magic philtres. In the *Dialogues* of Lucian, Thais is astonished that the lover of Glycera had quit her for Gorgon: "What charm has he found in those dead lips and pendulous cheeks?" says Thais. "Is it on account of her beautiful nose that he has taken her, or on account of her bald head and her great skinny neck?" In the same *Dialogues*, Tryphene makes mockery of the old Philematium, who had been surnamed *Birdtrap*. "Have you remarked well her age and her

wrinkles?" says Tryphene . . . "She swears that she is not more than twenty-two," replies Charmides. . . . "But do you believe her oaths rather than your own eyes? Do you not see that her hair is beginning to whiten about the temples? If you had ever seen her altogether naked!" . . . "She never permitted me that." . . . "And with reason, for she has a body as speckled as a leopard."

These old *hetairai*, when they were painted and adorned, would place themselves at a high window which opened on the street, with a sprig of myrtle between their fingers; playing with it as with a magician's rod; or chewing it between their lips, they would appeal to the passers-by. If one of the latter paused, the courtesan would make a well-known sign, joining her thumb and ring finger in such a manner as to represent with her half-closed hand a ring; in response to this signal, the man had but to raise the index finger of his right hand in the air, and at once the woman would disappear and come down to meet him. Then he would present himself at the door, and in the *atrium* he would find a servant maid who would conduct him in silence, a finger on her mouth, into a room which was lighted only by the door, when one drew the thick curtain which covered it. At the moment this new guest crossed the threshold, the servant would seize him by the arm and demand of him the sum fixed by the mistress of the place; he had to give it without bargaining, after which he might enter the room and the curtain would fall behind him. The courtesan, of whom he had caught but a glimpse by the light of day, would appear to him as a vision in the shadow of this cell, into which there filtered a feeble twilight through the portieres. It made little difference then whether or not there was youth, freshness, a pure and candid beauty in this voluptuous obscurity, which was by no means unfavorable to the form of the body, but which rendered futile everything which was not to be perceived by touch. Nevertheless, old age would come on and deprive the old courtesans, by taking away their embonpoint and softening their flesh, of the happy privilege of passing for young; they did

not always renounce the benefits of their trade, since they then would devote themselves to the amorous education of the young *hetairai* and so still continue to live by Prostitution. They had also, at need, two industries sufficiently lucrative to which they might resort: they might make philtres for lovers or cosmetics for courtezans, and they might practice the office of a midwife. Phebiane, not yet old, writes to the old Anicetus, her lover: "One of my neighbor women, with child, has just sent for me, and I went there in haste, taking with me the instruments of the art of accouchement."

These midwives, these makers of philtres, were even more expert in the art of seducing and corrupting a young novice; the *Letters* of Alciphron and the *Dialogues* of Lucian are full of the gallant dialectic of these aged counsellors to debauchery. It is ordinarily the mother who prostitutes her own daughter, and who, after having tarnished the virginity of this innocent victim, sets about also to soil her soul. "It is not such a great evil," says the frightful Crobyle to her daughter, Corinne,\* "that she gave herself last night to a rich and young Athenian; it is not so great an evil to cease to be a virgin and to make the acquaintance of a man who gives you, on his first visit, a mina (about one hundred francs), with which I propose to buy you a necklace!" She thus rejoiced to see her daughter beginning the trade which was to take them both out of misery: "How am I going to do that?" naively replies Corinne. . . . "As you have just done," replies the vixen, "and as your neighbor does." . . . "But is she not a courtezan?" . . . "What does it matter? You shall become as rich as she; like her, you shall have a throng of adorers. You are weeping, Corinne? But see how many courtezans there are, what court they keep, what opulence is theirs!" Then follow the counsels of the mother, who presents to her daughter the example of the auletris, Lyra, daughter of Daphnis: her taste for adornment, her attractive manners, her gayety, her caressing smile,

\*Cf. Aretino's Nanna and Pippa (*I Ragionamenti*, the section dealing with "The Art of the Courtezan" see the English version by the present translator, "The Works of Aretino," Pascal Covici, Chicago, 1926.)

which wins for her an assured commerce; if she consents to give herself, for a price agreed upon, at a festival, she does not become drunk, she handles her food with delicacy, she drinks without undue haste, she does not talk too much: "She has eyes only for him who has brought her there; it is he who has her love; when he takes her to the couch, she is neither beside herself nor disregardful; she is occupied only with pleasure, with completing her conquest. There is no one who does not praise her. Imitate her in all points, and we shall be happy." The daughter is not too much frightened by these conditions which the mother imposes in order that she may become rich: "But," she says upon reflection, "all those who buy our favors, are they like Lucritus who bought mine yesterday?" . . . "No," replies Crobyle with gravity, "there are some who are handsomer, some who are older, some even who are uglier." . . . "And must I caress these; are they as good as the others?" . . . "They are the best of all, for they give more. The handsome lads are merely handsome. Think only of enriching yourself." Thereupon, the mother sends her away to the bath; for Lucritus is to come again that same evening.

The mother of Musarium does not have to deal with an ignorant girl, who allows herself to be led with closed eyes, and who is experiencing her first amour; her daughter loves Chereas, who does not give her an obole and for whom she sells her jewels and her wardrobe; a courtezan who commits the folly of falling in love does not love by half measures. The old mother, indignant at this affair, which is a burden in place of being productive, is near to cursing a daughter whom she regards as being unworthy of her: "Go, blush!" she says to her, with anger and contempt. "You alone, of all courtezans, you appear without earrings, without a necklace, without a robe of Zarentum!" . . . "Alas! my mother," cries Musarium, stung to the quick in her woman's *amour-propre*, "are they happier or more beautiful than I?" . . . "They are wiser; they know their trade better; they do not believe the word of striplings, whose oaths are only on their lips.

But you, a new Penelope, faithful lover of a single man, you will have no other than Chereas. Only recently, an Arcanian villager (he was young also!) offered you two minae, the price of the wine which his father had sent him to sell in the city, and did you not repel him with an insulting smile? You only love to sleep with this second Adonis of yours!" . . . "What? Leave Chereas for a rustic who exhales the odor of a goat! Chereas is an Apollo and that Arcanian is a Silenus." . . . "That is all right! He may have been a rustic, but Antiphon, the son of Menecrates, who offered you a mina, is he not an elegant Athenian, young and charming as Chereas?" . . . "But Chereas has threatened me: 'I will kill you both if I find you together!'" . . . "Vain threat! Must you, then, renounce lovers and give up the life of a courtezan to take on the manners of a priestess of Ceres? Leave bygones; here it is the Haloa; it is a fete day; what has he given you?" . . . "My mother, he has nothing." . . . "He is the only one then who cannot find some means of getting around his father, of robbing him through some rogue of a slave, of demanding money from his mother, threatening, if she refuses, to embark on the first outgoing expedition. But he is always there, beseeching us, an avaricious monster; he does not want to give or to permit others to give us anything!" Musarium will hear nothing of this, and, despite her mother, she will continue to let herself be robbed by him until the time comes when she does not love him any more.

The courtezans of Greece were not often as disinterested as Musarium, and when they had lost time in loving, they soon made it up by levying contributions on those whom they did not love. One never entered their house except with purse in hand, and one almost never left with the purse. They had also different tariffs, and sometimes, out of repugnance or caprice, they would refuse to sell themselves at any price. It was not of the *hetairai*, but of the *dicteriades* that Xenarchos must have been speaking in his *Pentathle*, cited by Atheneus: "There are among them slender figures, thick ones, tall ones, short ones; young, old, middle-aged.

One may choose from among them all and find pleasure in the arms of the one he finds most amiable, without any need of scaling walls or employing any artifice to come at them. It is they who make the advances to you, and who often contend for the honor of receiving you into their beds." The hetairai, even those of the sailors and the common people, sometimes use their own free judgment, and, even when they had no preferred lover, closed their ears and their doors to certain pretenders. A simple slave girl, Salamine, whom Gebellus had taken out of the shop of a lame merchant, and whom he wished to make his concubine, resisted the advances of this gross person, who displeased her invincibly: "Punishment frightens me less than sharing your couch," she says to him. "I did not flee it last night. I had hidden myself in the garden where you went to search for me. Closed in a coffer, I disrobed myself for the horror of your embraces. Yes, rather than support them, I have resolved to hang myself. I do not fear death, and I do not fear to explain myself haughtily. Yes, Gebellus, I hate you. Enormous Colossus, you frighten me; you make me think of a monster. Your breath is poison to me. Go to perdition! I hope you find some old Helen of the hamlets, ugly, toothless and perfumed with greasy oil!" Alciphron does not tell us whether or not Salamine ended by growing accustomed to the monstrous figure of Gebellus. The merchants who thus sold the slaves whom they had reared and trained for love were known as *andropodocapeloi*; these slave girls, whose haunches had been compressed with knotted cords and bandalets, were distinguished by certain secret qualities much sought after by Athenian libertines as a scandalous curiosity.

Many hetairai had commenced by being slaves; then some lover, taken with their charms or grateful for their services, had purchased them, or perhaps they had redeemed themselves with the gifts which had been made to them. Most of them preserved always the sordid and avaricious character of slaves; they gradually increased the price of their favors in the degree to which

fortune favored them. After having learned their trade in a dicterion, where the rule of the house did not permit the receiving of more than an obole, they soon were asking one or two drachmas, once they were free; soon a stater of gold was not enough; a mina seemed to them a mere bagatelle, and they ended by demanding a talent, that is to say, eight thousand francs in our money,\* when they happened to be in vogue. This increase of wage took place very rapidly, if they were beautiful, adroit and intriguing. But this prosperity did not last, if they were lacking in mind and prudence; in the latter case, they might be seen rapidly descending the ladder to the ranks of the unlettered hetairai, and they then had to be content with a few drachmas extorted from the parsimonious poverty of their gross visitors. They might have been seen in the past promenading in magnificent litters, amid a cortege of slaves and eunuchs, they might have been viewed laden with bracelets, earrings, rings and golden ornaments, freshly perfumed under their gauze and silk; they were to be seen, a short while afterward, covered with squalid rags, their hair in disorder, their arms emaciated, their necks wrinkled and pendulous, seated under a long portico of the Piraeus or wandering among the tombs of the Ceramicus. The insolence of these creatures in good fortune but made their humiliation in misfortune stand out the more. All that was needed to cause this sudden decadence was a law suit, a malady or a vice like drunkenness or gambling. No one wept for them in seeing them decay and fall into the depths of misery and abasement; for they had been without pity and without heart in the moment of their splendor. How many tears, how many ruins, how many despairs had been their work! Despite their vices, despite their infamy, they only too often gave birth to veritable passions!

The *Letters* of Alciphron are full of the complaints of unfortunate lovers, who had seen themselves deceived or been given their conge; and with the railleries of the cruel hetairai, who repel and torture them. Here is Simalion, ruined by Petala, and more

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\*About \$1,180.00 in American money.

enamored of her than ever; there is the fisherman Anchenius who, in order to possess his mistress, came near making her his wife; moreover, in the *Dialogues* of Lucian, it is Myrtale who mocks herself of Dorian after having despoiled him: "When I loaded you with gifts," the plaintive Dorian says to her, "I was your well-beloved, your spouse, your master; I was all for you; but now since I no longer possess anything, and since you have made a conquest of the merchant of Bithynia, your door is closed for me. In front of that inexorable door I burst into vain and solitary tears; but he, he is alone with you, all the night, drunken with caresses." . . . "What! You speak of loading me with gifts," replies the mocking Myrtale. "I have ruined you, you say? Let us count up and see what you have given me." . . . "Yes, let us count, Myrtale. In the first place, slippers of Sicyone: let us estimate them at two drachmas." . . . "You have slept two nights with me." . . . "Let us go on. On my return from Syria, I brought you a vase full of the perfume of Phoenicia which cost me, I swear it by Neptune, two drachmas." . . . "And as for me, I gave you on your departure a short tunic, which the sailor Epiurus had forgotten at my house." . . . "But Epiurus recognized it and took it from me again, not without a fight, I call upon the gods to witness! In coming back from the Bosphorus, I brought you two onions of Cyprus, five *saperdes*\* and eight perches; besides this, eight dry biscuits, a vase of figs of Caria, and finally, ungrateful one that you are, I brought you from Patara gilded slippers. I also remember a fine cheese of Gythium." . . . "That all comes to about five drachmas." . . . "Alas! Myrtale, it is all that I possessed! Unfortunate mariner that I was! Now, I preside over the right wing of the rowers and you despise me! Only a short time ago, at the solemn feast of Aphrodite, did I not lay down, and for your sake, a silver drachma at the feet of Venus? Have I not given two drachmas to your mother to buy you slippers? And to that Lyde, two or three

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\*There is no precise equivalent for this word in English. *Saperdes* was the Pontic name for the fish known as *korakinos*, when salted. *Saperdis*, by distinction, is employed by Aristotle as the name of a fresh fish. The *korakinos* was found particularly in the Nile.

oboles? All of this, rightly calculated, amounts to the fortune of a sailor." But Myrtale merely laughed, as she counted with pride the rich presents which she had received from her merchant of Bithyne; a necklace; earrings; a rug; and silver. And she turns her back on him saying: "O fortunate sweetheart of Dorian! Oh! No doubt you will bring her onions of Cyprus and cheese of Gythium!" Petala, who also is looking for a merchant of Bithynia, and who has not yet found one, writes to Simalion, whose lachrymose and parsimonious love importuned her: "Gold, tunics, jewels, slaves: those are what my profession and my situation demand. My fathers did not leave me rich possessions at Nurinonte; I had no part in the product of the mines of Attica. The ungrateful tributes of pleasure, the all too light presents of love, which this crowd of avaricious and senseless lovers groaningly pay me, are all my wealth: I have lived for a year with you, consumed with displeasure and ennui. Not even a perfume flows over my hair! These old and gross stuffs of Tarentum form all my attire. I do not dare appear before my companions. Shall I find the means of existence at your side? . . . You weep! It is too much. I need a lover who will provide for me. You weep! How ridiculous! In the name of Venus! He idolizes me, he says, and so I must give myself to him! He cannot live without me! What! You have no chalices of gold? Can you not get money from your father, or the savings of your mother?" It happened only too often that a young man, blinded by his passions, yielded to these fatal suggestions and robbed his parents in order to satisfy the rapacity of an hetaira who did not love him, and who dismissed him without pity as soon as she could get no more out of him. Anaxilis had reason to say, in one of his comedies: Of all the ferocious beasts, there is none more dangerous than an hetaira.

Whatever may have been their avarice, the courtezans besieged the altars of the gods and goddesses with sacrifices and offerings; but what they asked of the divinities was not that they might encounter loving and devoted hearts, handsome and well-formed

adorers; they were only concerned with lucre, and they hoped by bringing an offering to a temple that the god or goddess of that temple would send them, from Asia or from Africa, the *opima spolia* of a rich old man. Their generosity, even with regard to the masters of destiny, was therefore but speculation and a sort of usury. When they had done a good business and found a dupe, they would go to thank the divinity to whom they believed they owed this good fortune; they did not indulge in double-dealing with the gods or the priests, because they hoped they would soon be recompensed with new profits. The mother of Musarium, irritated that her daughter did not exact payment from Chereas, cries ironically: "If we find one more such lover as Chereas, we shall have to sacrifice a she-goat to Venus Pandemos! A heifer to Venus Uranios! Another heifer to Venus of the Garden! We shall have to consecrate a crown to the goddess of riches!" The dicteriade, Lysidis, wishing to make a praise offering to Venus of the People, gives her a singular one, reminiscent of the emblematic brooches offered by the courtezan Rhodopis in the temple of the Delphian Apollo: "O Venus! Lysidis offers you this golden spur which once belonged to a very beautiful foot. It has animated more than one proud mount, and even while it spurred with much agility, no courser ever had a bloody flank from it; the proud animal reached the end of its course without any need of being spurred. And so she hangs this instrument up in the middle of your temple!" The learned commentators of the Greek *Anthology* have remained indecisive enough on the subject of this spur, which, according to some, figured the spur of pleasure and the piquancy of debauchery; according to others, it was the impatient request of a courtezan who had drained the purse of her clients; according to still others, it was an instrument of female libertinism which aided the errors of a lewd imagination. At Corinth, the hetaira offered and dedicated herself to Venus, who thus enjoyed the fruit of this sacred Prostitution.

The courtezans were in greater number in Corinth than at Athens; hence, the celebrated proverb which has traversed all

antiquity and come down to us with a slight change of significance: "*It is not permitted to all the world to go to Corinth.*" Different origins were assigned to this proverb, all of which had to do with the courtezans of this city who were so renowned.\* Aristophanes, in his *Plutus*, explains the proverb by saying that "the women of Corinth repel the poor and receive the rich." Strabo is more explicit, telling how the merchants and the sailors who disembarked at Corinth during the fetes of Venus found so many enchantresses among the consecrated ones of the goddess that they ruined themselves utterly before they had set foot in the town. Strabo reproduces, elsewhere, the same proverb, with a variation which justifies the sense of our commentators: "*One does not go with impunity to Corinth.*" Courtezans of all countries and of all ranks abounded in that opulent city, in which pupils of Prostitution were publicly instructed in the temples of Venus. The commerce in debauchery was the most active and the most extensive of any in this vast and populous emporium of the universe. All, or almost all the women exercised the trade of venal love; each house was the equivalent of a dicterion. A courtezan, seated at her door, was regarding one day the arriving vessels and waiting for new victims; some one reproached her with her idleness, telling her she would be better to be spinning wool and weaving cloth than to be sitting there with her arms crossed: "What do you mean by speaking of idleness?" she says. "It has not taken me very long to get all the cloth it takes to make the sails of three ships!" She meant by that, as Strabo remarks, that she had obliged three sea-captains to sell their vessels in order to pay her. The comic poet Eubulus had represented, in his piece, the *Cercopes*, a poor devil who gaily avowed that he had been pillaged by fate: "I went through Corinth," he said, "and I ruined myself by eating a certain pea which is called *ocime* (courtezan or basilisk); I committed so many

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\*This renown even has crept into the lexicons. Cf. the verb, *corinthiazomai*, which the respectable Messrs. Liddell and Scott define as: "to practice whoredom because Corinth was famous for its courtezans." See Aristophanes' *Frogs*, 133.

follies that I lost even my hood.” The poet plays upon the double sense of the word *ocime*, which signifies at once courtezan and sweet basil, and which thus recalled, by a figurative allusion, the fact that this aromatic herb was regarded as the favorite plant of scorpions. When Dionysius, the Tyrant, driven out of Syracuse, took refuge, despised and miserable, at Corinth, he wished to shield himself against the contempt which he inspired in others and the misery into which he was sinking more and more; and so, he would pass whole days, according to Justinian’s report, in the taverns and in the dicterions, living on *ocime* and defiling himself with all turpitudes.

The lubricious and indefatigable queens of Prostitution, far from being natives of Corinth, had been brought there at a very tender age by speculators or by matrons of pleasure; they came, for the most part, from Lesbos and the other islands of Asia Minor, Tenedos, Abydos, and Cyprus, as though to render homage to the traditions which made Venus spring from the foam of the Aegean Sea. A great number were brought from Miletus and from Phoenicia, which furnished the most ardent ones. But the most voluptuous ones, the most expert at least in the art of pleasure, were the women of Lesbos, so much so that in their honor a new Greek verb had been coined, *lesbiazein*, which signified not merely to make love, but to do so with art.\* The Phoenicians also enjoyed the privilege of endowing the Greek language with a verb which had much the same sense: *phoenipizein*, meaning to make love in the Phoenician manner. This was a praise which courtezans were ambitious to merit, whatever may have been their native country or that of their matron. Miletus was, as it were, the nursery of dancers and flute-players, the auletrides who served at the festivals of Greece; but Lesbos and Phoenicia sent the hetairai, which Corinth, an immense *gynaeceum* where Prostitution kept its public school, received to her bosom. Homer, among the presents which Agamemnon offers

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“To do like the Lesbian woman, Lat. *fellare*. ” (Liddell and Scott.) The verb occurs in Aristophanes.

to Achilles (*Iliad*, IX), cites with complacency "seven women, clever in fine works, seven Lesbians, whom he had chosen for himself, and who took from all the other women the prize of beauty." The *fine works* which characterized the cleverness of these Lesbian women were not those of the chaste and industrious Penelope.

In addition to the mysterious labors of love which early formed the assiduous studies of courtezans, their moral education, if one may employ such an expression in this connection, was composed of certain indecent precepts, applicable to certain conditions of hetairism, from the vilest dicteriade to the greatest hetaira of the aristocracy. It was, undoubtedly, not Solon who had edited this general code of the courtezans. One finds, here and there, in the Greek erotics, the principal instructions which the courtezans transmitted from one to another, and which might be divided into threee special categories: 1. The art of inspiring love; 2. the art of increasing and holding it; 3. the art of getting as much money out of it as possible. "It is proper," says one of the cleverest of her trade, in the *Letters* of Aristenetes, "it is proper to put a few difficulties in the path of young lovers and not to give them all they ask for. This artifice prevents satiety; keeps up the desire of a lover for a woman whom he loves and renders her favors always new to him. But things must not be pushed too far, or the lover will tire, become irritated, and form other projects and other liaisons; love flies away with as light a wing as it comes." Aristenetes, who, wholly a philosopher as he was, did not disdain to receive instruction from the courtezans, has formulated the same theory in another letter: "The pleasures which one hopes for," he says, "depend on inexpressible charms, which animate and sustain the vivacity of desire. If one has attained them, this is no longer the case." Lucian, in his *Discourse on Those Who Serve the Great*, approves the tactics of the hetairai who refuse something to their lovers: "It is but rarely," he says, "that they permit a few kisses, for they know by experience that enjoyment is the tomb of love; they neglect nothing in order to

prolong hope and desire." This, then, was the method by which the hetairai excited, reanimated, developed and implanted the love which they had inspired. They were not less ingenious in provoking it, and the means which they employed for this purpose increased in refinement with the distinction of the man to whom they were addressed and with the elevation of the class to whom the courtezans themselves belonged.

An hetaira, even if she were not so well trained, had certain manners which she employed in attracting men; her looks, her smiles, her poses, her gestures were more or less attractive baits which she cast about her; each knew well enough what she must conceal or display; sometimes she would feign distraction and indifference, sometimes she was immobile and silent, sometimes she would run after her prey and seize it on the wing, in order not to lose it, sometimes she sought the crowd and sometimes solitude. Her snares changed, in form and aspect, according to the nature of the game which she proposed to capture. They all possessed a provocative and licentious smile, which, from afar, awakened impure thoughts by addressing the senses, and which, close up, showed teeth of shining ivory, lips of trembling coral, cheeks with capricious dimples and a throat of quivering alabaster. This was the *cachynnus* which Saint Clement of Alexandria describes as the *laugh of courtezans*. The hetaira of superior position had fully as many means of seduction, more decent but none the less sure. She would send her slave or her servant maid to write with carbon on the walls of the Ceramicus the name of the man whom she wished to captivate. Once she had been remarked by him, she would send him bouquets which she had worn, fruits which she had bitten into; she would let him know by a message that she was unable to sleep, or eat, or do anything but sigh. A man, however cold and severe he may be, is rarely insensible to a sentiment which he believes he has inspired. "She runs to embrace him when he comes," recounts Lucian in his *Toxaris*; "she stops him when he wants to go; she pretends that she only adorns herself for him, and she knows how to mingle, at the right mo-

ment, tears, disdain and sighs with the attractions and the beauty of her charms, her voice and her lyre.” Such were the artifices which a well taught hetaira did not fail to make use of, and with a success that was almost certain. These coquettish and lying artifices came, ordinarily, from old women, ancient courtezans, who taught them to the novices whom they instructed on their own account.

The celebrated Neera had been thus instructed by one named Nicarete, the freed woman of Charisius and the wife of Hippias, the cook of Charisius. Nicarete bought seven little girls: Anita, Stratole, Aristoclea, Metanire, Phila, Isthmiade and Neera. She was very clever at divining, from earliest infancy, those who were to be distinguished for their beauty; “she understood perfectly how to bring them up as she should,” says Demosthenes in his plea against Neera; “that was her profession and the one by which she lived.” These seven slaves she called her daughters, in order to create the impression that they were free, and in order to get more silver out of those who wished to have commerce with them; she sold the virginity of each one five or six times, and finally she sold the girls themselves. But these slaves had received such fine lessons that they were not slow redeeming their purchase money, and they continued, for their own profit, the trade of courtezan. The favors of a free-born girl were paid for more dearly than those of a slave or freed woman. The price was still higher if the hetaira passed for a married woman, although adultery, under the law, was punishable by death. But this law was almost never enforced; the guilty one was given over merely to the discretion of the outraged spouse, who most often was content with giving her a thrashing. The debt was ordinarily paid for by a sum of silver, which the adulterer gave in the form of an indemnity and ransom, constrained thus to relieve himself of a punishment as unpleasant as it was ridiculous, for if he did not redeem himself, the husband would leave him to the mercy of a slave, who would beat him cruelly, and who would fasten an enormous black radish on his behind. Such was, according to Athe-

naeus, the punishment of the adulterer, a punishment of which the Orientals have preserved some trace in their torture at the stake. It happened sometimes that the fear of the black radish was taken advantage of to make certain dupes believe that they had incurred this chastisement by committing an adultery without knowing it. Nothing was easier than to suppose an angry husband, after having supposed a married woman caught in a flagrant dereliction: "Ah, Venus, adorable goddess," cries the poet Anaxilis, "how could one run the risk of throwing himself into their arms when he thinks of the law of Draco? How dare to imprint even a kiss on their lips?" It appeared, nevertheless, that, in despite of the law of Draco, there were married women who, without the knowledge of their husbands, practiced the profession of hetaira. Megara, in a letter to her companion Bacchis, a letter which the rhetorician, Alciphron, did not have the modesty to destroy, says positively that Philumene, although newly married, took part in a festival of debauchery, where the most shameful excesses occurred: "She has found the secret means of coming here, by plunging her dear husband into the most profound sleep," with the aid of a philtre.

These soporific philtres, like the amorous philtres, were especially employed by the courtezans and debauchees who made love their single occupation. There were, as we have said, old women who sold or prepared these philtres. The preparation of the philtres was looked upon as a work of magic, and the old women who held the secret were generally supposed to have gotten it from the witches of Thessaly or of Phrygia. Theocritus and Lucian have revealed for us some of the mysterious ceremonies which accompanied the composition of a philtre, and Lucian more particularly tells us of the frequent use which was made of these philtres by courtezans, to render themselves either loved or hated. Abandoned by her lover, who prefers Gorgon, Thais attributes his infidelity to the philtres which Gorgon's mother knows how to prepare: "She knew," she says, "the secrets of all the enchantments of Thessaly; the moon descends at the sound of her voice;

she has been seen flying through the air in the middle of the night." This was a charm which blinded the unfaithful wretch, hiding from him the wrinkles and the ugliness of the monster, whom he only loved as the result of magic. Melissa, in order to get back her lover Charinus, whom Synamike has taken away from her, demands of Bacchis that she bring her a magician with the power to cause a woman who is detested to be loved and one who is loved to be hated: "I once knew, my dear," replies Bacchis, touched by her companion's grief, "a witch of Syria who would be just the one for this business of yours. She it was who, at the end of four months, reconciled me with Phanias; a magical charm brought him back to my feet after I had despaired of ever seeing him again." . . . "And what does she charge, that old woman?" demands Melissa. "Do you remember?" . . . "Her art is not very costly, Melissa. One gives her a drachma and a loaf of bread; one adds seven oboles, some salt, perfumes, a torch and a chalice full of wine for her alone to empty. There must be also some object which comes from your lover, a cloak, his slipper, locks of hair or something similar." . . . "One of his slippers is at my house now." . . . "This old woman suspends them all from a rod, purifies them with perfumed vapors, and sprinkles salt on the fire. She pronounces two names and then, drawing a ball from her bosom, she whirls it around and recites rapidly her enchantment, composed of a number of barbaric words which make you shudder." There were several species of philtres: those which produced love, those which produced hate, those which rendered men impotent and women sterile; those, finally, which caused death. The use of these philtres was more or less dangerous, for a number of them contained true poisons, and yet, the hetairai constantly had recourse to them in carrying out their designs or satisfying their passions. Aristotle tells us that a woman who had given a man a philtre and caused his death, being cited before the Areopagus, was not condemned for the reason that she had not intended to kill her lover but to reanimate a dead love: the intention expiated the homicide. If

philtres were sold among the courtezans, so also were preservatives which stopped their effects; thus, according to Dioscorides, the root of the cyclamen, pounded fine and made up into lozenges, was a sovereign remedy against the most redoubtable philtres.

Did one wish to reduce a man to impotence, a woman to sterility, one poured for them wine in which one had strangled a grey mullet. Did one wish to bring back an unfaithful lover? One hardened a cake of unleavened flour, and one let this cake be consumed in a fire lighted with branches of thyme and laurel. In order to change love into hatred, one spied upon him or her who was to be affected, one observed the footprints of this person, and, without being perceived, one placed one's right foot in the print of the other's left, and vice versa, repeating all the while in a low tone: "I am walking on you, I am on top of you." The witch, when she whirled the magic ball around in an incantation, pronounced these words: "As this bronze globe turns under the auspices of Venus, so may my lover come rolling over the threshold of my door!" Sometimes she tossed into the magic brazier a wax image to which she had attached the name of the man or woman whom she was vowing to the ardors of love: "Just as I make this wax melt under the auspices of the god whom I invoke," the enchantress would murmur, "so may that frozen heart which I desire to inflame melt with love." There were certain solemn enchantments accompanied by mysterious sacrifices and secret practices. But ordinarily, they were content with a beverage or an ointment, into the composition of which had entered certain herbs or certain narcotic drugs, refrigerant, spasmodic or aphrodisiac in their effect. "The use of the philtre is very dangerous," wrote Myrrhine to Nicippe, "sometimes even it is fatal to the one who takes it. But what difference does it make! Dyphilus must live to love me or die in loving Thessala." The courtezans, in their preoccupations with love, with fortune, with ambition or with vengeance, often consulted also the Thessalian women in order to know the future, to learn the issue of an adventure which they had undertaken or to penetrate the shadows of destiny. Gly-

cera, in a letter to the poet Menander, speaks of a woman of Phrygia who "knows how to divine, by means of certain cords of rushes which she stretches during the night: by their movement, she is instructed in the will of the gods as clearly as though they had appeared to her in person." This magical operation had to be preceded by various purifications and sacrifices, in which one made use of male incense, of oblong lozenges of storax, of cakes made in the light of the moon, and of leaves of the wild purslain. Recourse was had to these charms in order to obtain news of an absent mistress or a distant lover. As to the philtres composed for producing love, they were so powerful and so terrible that their moderate employment produced the fury of the Menades and the Corybantes, while the abuse of these amorous excitants caused madness or death.

The hetairai, among themselves, knew jealousies, resentments and hatreds, which often led them to this species of vengeance. This was a case, for example, when one would take away a rich and handsome lover from another who possessed him; and this war of feminine rivalries made use of all the less honorable means in order to achieve a triumph of vanity or of avarice. These women thought only of enriching and of satisfying themselves at the expense of one another; they were eternally rivals and often implacable enemies. When Gorgon, who pretended to be the friend of Glycera, took away the latter's lover, Thais consoles Glycera by saying: "That is a trick which we play often enough, we other courtezans." Then she concludes in these terms: "Gorgon shall pluck him, as you have plucked him, and as you shall pluck another." The translation of Perrot d' Ablancourt is here more expressive than the Greek text of Lucian, which limits itself to saying: "You shall find another prey." Despite the wrong they did to one another, the hetairai remained, none the less, friends, or rather, they refrained by policy from embroiling themselves. There was among them a certain *esprit de corps*, a common interest which bound them together and which brought them back even closer together after they had been dis-

united for a moment. They detested each other all the more at the bottom of their hearts, notwithstanding their smiles, caresses and reciprocal flatteries. But on the other hand, when they did love each other, their love became a rage, and nothing was more frequent than Lesbian love between courtezans. This love, which Greece did not brand with any striking reprobation, had, no more, to fear the chastisement of the law or the anathemas of religion. It was in the dicterions, it was among the *hetaira* who were shut up, that this *contreamour* (*anteros*) reigned with all its transports. A courtezan who possessed this taste against nature (*trithas*) inspired only horror in men, but she carefully concealed from them a vice which found only too much indulgence among her companions. To Sappho commonly were attributed the scandalous developments which Lesbian love had taken, as well as the philosophic theories on which it was established, like a cult founded on a dogma. Sappho was punished for her contempt of men by the unrequited love which Phaon inspired in her; but the evil which Sappho had perpetrated, by her doctrines and by her example, was propagated in Greek manners, infected all classes of *hetairai* and even penetrated to the gynceums of modest virgins and venerable matrons.

We shall have no more to say than Lucian does on this delicate subject, and we shall select only the most decent translation. The dialogue of Cleonarium and of Leena is like a picture after nature by one of those painters of the courtezans of Athens: *Cleonarium*. “Fine news, Leena! They tell me you have become the lover of the rich Megilla, that you are united, and that, . . . I do not know what to say. You blush? Is it true then?—*Leena*. It is true, I am ashamed to say . . . It is a strange thing!—*Cleonarium*. Eh! How’s that? In the name of Ceres! And what is our sex coming to? And what do you think you are doing? Where will this marriage take you? Ah! . . . you are not my friend, if you keep this mystery from me.—*Leena*. I love you as much as any other, but Megilla is truly like a man.—*Cleonarium*. I do not understand. Can it be

she is an unnatural woman? They say that Lesbos is full of those women who, refusing any commerce with men, take the place of men with women.—*Leena*. It is something like that.—*Cleonarium*. Tell me then, Leena, how you have been led to listen to her passion, to share it, and to satisfy it?—*Leena*. Megilla and Demonasse, the rich Corinthians, a prey to the same tastes, staged an orgy. I was taken there to sing and accompany myself on the lyre. The songs and the night grew longer; it was the hour for repose; they were drunken. Then, Megilla: ‘Leena, it is time to sleep. Come lie here between us?’—*Cleonarium*. And you accepted? . . . And then?—*Leena*. They first gave me masculine kisses, not only joining their lips to mine, but with open mouths. I felt myself extinguished in their arms; they caressed my bosom; Demonasse bit me when she kissed me. As for me, I did not know where all this was going to end. Finally, Megilla, in great heat, threw back her coiffure and pressed me to her, threatening me like an athlete, young, robust, and she . . . I was greatly moved. But she: ‘Tell me, Leena, have you seen a more beautiful boy?’—‘A boy, Megilla? I see none here.’—‘Cease to regard me as a woman; today I am called Megillus, and I have married Demonasse.’ I burst out laughing: ‘I did not know, my handsome Megillus,’ I said to her, ‘that you here were like Achilles among the virgins of Scyros. No doubt you have everything that a young hero needs, and Demonasse has found it out.’—‘That is about it, Leena, and this sort of pleasure also has its charms.’—‘Are you then one of those hermaphrodites with a double organ?’ . . . (How simple I was, *Cleonarium*!)—‘No, I am altogether male.’—‘That puts me in mind of that story of a Boeotian auletris: a woman of Thebes was changed into a man, and this man afterwards became a celebrated augur, named Tiresias. Has some such accident as this happened to you?’—‘Nothing of the sort, Leena, I am just like you, but I feel in me all the unbridled passions and burning desire of the man.’—‘Desire? . . . Is that all?’—‘Deign to give yourself to my transports, Leena, and you shall see that my caresses are vir-

ile; I even have in me something of the male: deign to give yourself, and you shall see.' She supplicated me for a long time, made me a present of a precious necklace and a diaphanous cloak. I gave myself to her transports, and she embraced me then like a man; she believed that she was such, as she kissed me, agitated and succumbing under the weight of pleasure.—*Cleonarium.* And what, Leena, were your sensations? Where? How? —*Leena.* Do not ask me the rest. A veritable turpitude! . . . In the name of Urania! I shall not reveal it."

## CHAPTER IX

A MONG the courtezans whom we have cited, after Lucian and after Athenaeus, a number were flute-players, and, as we have said, in enumerating the principal species of women of pleasure to be distinguished among the Greeks, the flute-players formed a class apart in what we have called the college of courtezans. They had more or less obvious analogies with the dicteriades and the hetairai; but in général, they differed as much from the one class as from the other, for they were not attached to public houses and they did not inevitably become the property of the first comer; on the one hand, one did not go to seek with them those distractions of the mind and the intelligence which were to be met with among most of the hetairai; then, if they grew rich by prostitution, they had, besides, a trade which provided them with a living. This trade was often lucrative enough. They did not accept, therefore, on their own account, the designation of courtezan, although they did everything to justify it. In their eyes, the title of their profession was always an evidence of their liberty and their independent existence. And so, they called themselves *flute-players*, and under this name, they had no scruples in playing the courtezan more than those who passed openly as such. We have seen that, under certain circumstances, the flute-players were associated with the abominations of low women; we have heard, also, the advice which Musarium received from her mother; and so, we cannot doubt that these women were quite ready to satisfy the passions which they aroused, and which they sought to arouse, by the sound of their instruments and the spectacle of their dances; but nevertheless, an auletris was not, properly speaking, an hetaira. The latter, on the other hand, regarded herself as a good deal above an auletris, whom she considered a female mountebank, practising a manual trade; the other,

on the contrary, had little regard for the courtezan, who had no other status than that which came from being the recipient of a part of the desires and the transports which she herself was proud of having aroused with her dancing and her flutes.

The flute was a favorite instrument with the Athenians; its inventors had a high place in the recognition and admiration of men; to the god Pan was commonly attributed the invention of the straw pipe, or simple flute; while that of the cross-flute was attributed to Midas, the king of Phrygia, and that of the double flute to Marsyas. These different flutes had since been greatly perfected, and the art of drawing from them melodious sounds had been equally perfected. There were certain women who excelled above all in this art, which was looked upon as the most puissant auxiliary to pleasure. In vain did the ancient poets, who were, it may be, but disdained flute players, endeavor to filch the instrument of Marsyas from the beautiful hands of the auletrides, by inventing that ingenious fable in which they showed Pallas as indignant at the deformity inflicted on the human face by the act of playing the flute and as proscribing the use of this instrument, which made even nymphs grimace. The number of the auletrides, however, increased, and their presence at the festivals became absolutely indispensable. It had been recognized, as a matter of fact, that when the flute players puffed out their cheeks, contracted their lips, and momentarily disturbed the harmonious ensemble of their features, they were none the less charming when they laid down their instruments and ceased their concerts in order to take a more or less active part in the festival itself. Moreover, most of these musicians had learned to respect their beauty and to play the double as well as the simple flute without altering, by ugly efforts and movements, their voluptuous physiognomy. Poetry, then, took upon itself the task of rehabilitating the flute, and while a clever sculptor was representing in marble Minerva pursuing the satyr Marsyas in order to punish him for having taken a flute which she had thrown down, the poets were interpreting the wrath of the chaste goddess by accus-

ing the sounds of the flute of having put her wisdom to sleep and led the deity herself, soothingly, into the arms of pleasure.

The flutes resounded also in the solemn festivals of the gods, especially in that of Ceres, which would not have been complete if the auletrides had not played in it their ordinary role by flutting and dancing; but it was, rather, in the Bacchic fetes, in the joyous reunions at table, that the marvelous instrument of Marsyas exercised its irresistible power. Each stage of the repast was announced by a different air which was proper to it: *Comos* for the first course, *Dicomos* for the second, *Tetramos*, etc. If the guests appeared satisfied with the victuals and wine which had been served them, the air called *Hedicomos* expressed their satisfaction and bore witness to their good humor; if they wished to applaud, the triumphal air called *gingras* mingled with their handclapping and imitated the boisterous sound of the latter. There was also an air, called the *Callinice*, which celebrated the high deeds of drinkers, and which inspired their drunken defiance. The double flute, which included the masculine, held in the right hand, and the feminine flute, held in the left, lent itself to all the *tours de force* of imitative harmony; it rendered faithfully, in its flats and sharps, the most untranslatable sounds, and, with them, the most fugitive emotions. And so, one saw the table companions, electrified and subjugated by this enervating music, forgetting the beakers in their hands filled and filled again, reclining with ecstasy on their couches, and following with eyes and ears the rhythm of the song and the measure of the dance. Their drunkenness was thus prolonged for entire nights: "I well may say," wrote Lamia to Demetrius, "it is that prince who has shared your bed, it is he who spends the night listening to you play the flute! I would not have believed it myself!" These airs of the flute were sometimes sustained by songs which expressed their object even better; they were governed also after the dances and the pantomime, which habitually accompanied them and which displayed the same variety. This pantomime, these dances,

these voluptuous airs served as a prelude to scenes of pleasure in which the auletrides did not remain inactive.

In the first ages of Greece, the art of the flute was in honor among the young folk, who preferred it even to the art of the lyre; but when the Thebans and the other Boeotians, who were proverbially accused of natural stupidity, and whose intelligence was not, it is true, so highly developed as that of the Athenians—when these gross and heavy children of Boeotia had surpassed as flute players all their compatriots, this instrument was abandoned to women and declared unworthy of free men, excepting in the provinces, where it still found clever interpreters. Manners had begun to be corrupt, and Asia, especially Phrygia and Ionia, were sending a multitude of auletrides to Athens, to Corinth, and into the principal towns of Greece. The Thebans preserved their superiority, or at least their reputation as players of the flute, to such a degree that, in the second century of the vulgar era, a statue of Hermes which had remained upright among the ruins of Thebes still presented this inscription, reported by St. John Chrysostom: “Greece accords thee, O Thebes, superiority in the art of the flute. Thebes honors in thee, O Panomos, the mother of the art.” But in despite of the instrumental science of Thebes, the Phrygian, Ionian and Milesian flute players knew no rivals. They not merely played the flute; they sang, they danced, they mimicked; they were beautiful, well-formed and compliant. They were summoned when one had guests to entertain and divert; they rented themselves out, thus, for the evening or for the night; the conditions varied according to needs and circumstances, the price according to the merit and beauty of the musicians. Ordinarily, the flute player demanded no wage except for her music and her dancing; she reserved the right of concluding other bargains during the supper. When this flute player was a slave and had a patron or a master who exploited her, she was put up at auction at the end of the exercises, and she entered the bed of the highest bidder. Athenaeus tells us how a philosopher who piqued himself on his austerity, upon supping one day in the

company of young debauchees, repulsed disdainfully an auletris who had dropped at his feet, as though to put herself under the protection of his philosophy; but this foolish philosophy became more human when the mountebank deployed her graces and began dancing to the sound of the flutes; the philosopher forgot his white beard and ran up the bids in order to obtain this charming daughter, who exhibited no rancour toward him; but she was not knocked down to him, whereupon he fell into a terrible wrath, asserting that his bids had not been considered and that the decision was void. But the auletris would not put herself on sale again, and the philosopher ended by coming to fisticuffs over the matter with his neighbors.

All the auletrides did not dance; all the dancers did not play the flute: "I have spoken above," says Aristagoras in his *mam-mecythus*, "of the beautiful dancing courtezans (*orchastridai hetairas*); I shall say no more of them, leaving aside also the flute players who, scarcely of marriageable age, enervate the most robust men and make them pay well." These flute players had certain methods of debauchery capable, according to the expression of a poet, of exhausting Hercules himself and emaciating the embonpoint of a Silenus. Those libertines who had experimented in the refinements of Asiatic lust could not surpass them; and at the end of the meal, when all their senses had been overexcited by the sound of the flutes, they were often seized with an excess of erotic fury and precipitated themselves one upon another with blows until victory had decided to whom the flute player was to belong: "To understand this," cries Antiphanes, the comic poet, "one must have found one's self often at those repasts where each one pays his share, and have received there and given a number of blows in the honor of some courtezan!" The more stubbornly one fought, the harder and more emphatic the blows became, the prouder grew the queen of the battle, and the better she compensated her victor, to whose health all goblets were refilled and crowned with roses. The passion of the Athenians for the auletrides was carried to a high point, and, if one believes Theopom-

pus in his *Philippics*, from one end of Greece to the other nothing but the sound of flutes and the blows of fists was to be heard. The auletrides, in general less interested than the hetairai and also more amorous, did not pique themselves on their ability to resist a gallant proposition: "Do not address yourself to the great hetairai for your pleasure; you will find it more readily among the great flute players!" Such is the advice which Epocrates in the *Anti-Lais* gives his fellow citizens. It is to be understood that respectable women never assisted at these orgies, and that the entrance of an auletris into the festival hall put them to flight before they had even heard the sound of a flute.

These flute players excited such transports with their libidinous music that the guests shed their rings and necklaces to offer them to the players. The clever flutist did not have hands enough to receive all the gifts made her in the course of a repast during which her music had turned all heads. Theopompus, in a work now lost on the thefts at Delphi, had transcribed an inscription to be read on a votive marble near the iron brooches of the courtezan Rhodopis: "Phaylles, tyrant of the Phocians, gave to Bromiade, a flute player and a daughter of Diniade, a *carchesium* (a mounted cup in the form of a gondola) of silver and a *cyssibion* (a crown of ivy) of gold." At certain meals, all the vessels were of gold and silver, and each time the flute player found a more intoxicating note or the dancer accentuated her steps and gestures, there was a rain of flowers, of jewels and of money, which she caught in mid-air with a prodigious dexterity. This species of courtezan grew rich more rapidly than all the others, and they amassed also considerable property while they were the vogue. Polybus grows indignant over the fact that the most beautiful houses in Alexandria bore the names of Myrtium, of Mnesis, of Pothyne: "And yet," he says, "Mnesis and Pothyne were flute players, while Myrtium was one of those public women condemned to infamy, and whom we call dicteriades!" Myrtium had been the mistress of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, as had been also Mnesis and Pothyne. There was no age, no rank,

no position safe against the prestige exercised by these dancers and musicians. Athenaeus tells us that Arcadian ambassadors were sent to King Antigonus, who received them with much regard and who caused a splendid feast to be served them. These ambassadors were old men, austere and venerable; they sat at table, ate and drank, with a sombre and taciturn air. But suddenly, the flutes of Phrygia give the signal for the dance; the dancers, enveloped in transparent veils, enter the hall, balancing themselves upon the great toe; then, their movement quickens; they uncover their heads, then their throats, and, successively, their entire bodies. They are entirely nude, with the exception of a pair of drawers which hides their loins; their dance becomes more and more lascivious and ardent. The ambassadors are exalted at this unaccustomed spectacle, and, without respect for the king, who is fainting with laughter, they hurl themselves upon the dancers, who had not expected such a welcome as this, but who submit to the duties of hospitality.

One sees, in the *Dialogues of Courtezans*, that the auletrides had tenderer hearts than their rivals in Prostitution. Lucian appears to take pleasure in representing them, at least in their youth, as passionate and generous lovers, who demanded nothing of their lovers and who often even ruined themselves for the latter. It is Musarium who sells two Ionian necklaces in order to provide for Chereas, who promises to marry her; it is Myrtium, jealous of Pamphiles, who has made her a mother, who trembles to see this dear lover espousing the daughter of the pilot Philon: "Ah! Pamphiles, you give me my life," she cries on learning that her suspicions had no foundation, "I should have hung myself in despair, if this marriage had taken place!" It is Philine, equally jealous but with more reason, who takes vengeance on her unfaithful Dyphilus by doing everything which will inspire jealousy on his side: "What was this folly of yours yesterday?" demands Philine's mother. "What happened at that feast? Dyphiles came to find me straight away; he burst into tears and complained of his wrongs, saying you were drunk and that you had

danced, despite his forbidding you to do so, that you gave a kiss to his companion, Lamprias, and that, perceiving the suffering he felt, you abandoned him for Lamprias, whom you enlaced in your arms; that, moreover, he was pining away, and that tonight again you refused to share his couch; that he wept, but that you, retiring upon a neighboring couch, have not ceased to desolate him with your songs and your refusals.” Philine justifies her conduct by the griefs which she accuses Dyphilus of having caused her; who, during the feast, had the air of preferring Thais, the mistress of Lamprias: “He saw my feelings, my attitude warned him; and yet, he took Thais by the lobe of her ear, and, drawing her to him, imprinted a fiery kiss on her lips, from which it seemed he could not break away. I wept, he smiled. He spoke, low and long, to Thais, and, without doubt, of me. Thais looked at me and smiled also. Only the arrival of Lamprias put an end to their transports. And yet, so that he might have no reproach to make me, I took my place by his side during the meal. Thais rose and was the first to dance, affecting to uncover her leg, as if she were the only one who had a pretty leg. Lamprias kept silent, but Dyphilus, bursting into eulogies, did not stop praising the grace of all her movements, the time of all her steps, remarking that her foot was made for keeping cadence, that her leg was elegant, and a thousand other impertinences. One would have said that it was Sosandre of Calamis and not that Thais whom you know well enough, since you have seen her in the bath. She was on the point of being insulting when she said: ‘Why doesn’t she dance in her turn, that one who is afraid of showing off her pock-marked spindle legs!’ What would you have me to tell you, my mother? I arose and I danced. The guests applauded. Dyphilus alone, leaning back nonchalantly till the end of my dance, kept his eyes fixed on the ceiling.” Philine thus wished to bring chagrin to Dyphilus by pretending to prefer Lamprias, and she succeeded so well in driving her unfaithful lover to despair that her mother, expert courtezan that she was, thought it necessary to give her this advice: “I will per-

mit you to feel resentment, but not to commit an outrage. A lover whom one offends goes away and is incited against one's self. You have been too rigorous with him. Recall the proverb: The bow one bends too far breaks."

If the auletrides had *amants de cœur*, they were also given to intimate liaisons among themselves, which possessed all the allurements of the most unbridled. It was this Lesbian love into which Leena, still innocent, although she was a flute player, had permitted herself to be inducted by Megilla and Demonasse, the Corinthian auletrides. We have already seen what sort of lessons these courtezans gave. We have every reason to believe that the dancers and musicians were less given to the love of men than to that of which they themselves bore all the burden. These women, early trained in the art of the voluptuary, soon fell into those disorders in which the imagination entangles the senses. Their entire life was, as it were, a perpetual and lascivious wrestling match, an assiduous étude in physical beauty; from having viewed their own nudity and compared it with that of their companions, they formed a taste for such nudity, and they created for themselves bizarre and even ardent pleasures, without the aid of their lovers, who often left them cold and insensible. The mysterious passions which were thus inflamed in the auletrides, were violent, terrible, jealous, implacable. We must listen, in the *Dialogues* of Lucian, to the beautiful Charmide, who groans and laments because her mistress, Philematium, whom she has loved for seven years and whom she has loaded with presents, has quitted her and taken a man for her successor. Philematium is old and rouged, but it makes no difference; she knows how to excite a love which nothing can appease or replace. Charmide, in order to conquer this love which devours her, has endeavored to choose another mistress; she has given five drachmas to Tryphene to come share her bed, after a feast at which she has touched no food and emptied not a single goblet. But Tryphene is barely couched at her side when Charmide repels her, seeming to avoid contact with this new friend, who does not wish to

be paid when she is not employed. "I have chosen you to revenge myself on Philematium!" Charmide finally confesses to her. . . . "By Venus," cries Tryphene, wounded in her low woman's vanity, "I would not have accepted if I had known you were choosing me to take vengeance on another! And on Philematium! A monstrous imposter! Adieu, it is already the third hour of the night." . . . "Do not abandon me, my Tryphene; if what you say is true, if Philematium is only a decrepit and rouged old woman, . . . I can never again look her in the face." . . . "Ask your mother if she has gone to the bath with her? Your grandfather, if he were still living, would be able to tell you her age." . . . "If this is so, no more barriers between us. Take me in your arms, kiss me and let us give ourselves to Venus. Adieu forever, Philematium!"

These depraved manners were so common among the flute players that many of them would often meet at a feast to which a man was not admitted, and there they would commit debauchery under the auspices of Venus Peribasia. It was at these feasts, which were called *Callipyges*, it was in the midst of goblets of wine crowned with roses, it was in front of the charming tribunal of these seminude women that the battle of beauty was renewed, like that which took place on the shores of the Alpheus in the time of Cypselus, seven centuries before the Christian era. Cypselus, exiled from Corinth, built a city and peopled it with Parrha-sians, inhabitants of Arcady; in this city, consecrated to Ceres of Eleusis, Cypselus established games or beauty contests, in which all women were called to take part under the name of *chrysophores*. The first who won the victory was named *Herodice*. Since their foundation, these memorable combats had been renewed with *eclat* every five years, and the *chrysophores*, that is to say, the *gold bearers*, in order, without doubt, to signify that beauty was not to be sold too dearly, would come in a crowd to submit themselves to the gaze of the judges, who had no little difficulty in preserving at once their impartiality and their *sang-froid*. There were no other public contests of the same sort in

Greece, although beauty was honored and adored; but the courtesans were pleased, in their secret assemblies, to revive a gracious image of this foundation of Cypselus, and they would set themselves up as both judges and contestants in these voluptuous contests which took place behind closed doors. The auletrides, above all the hetairai, loved to view and judge themselves in this manner; this was merely a prelude to the mysteries which were most to their taste. Alciphron, altogether grave rhetorician that he is, has preserved for us the picture of one of these nocturnal fetes, in which the flute players and the dancers dispute not merely the palm of beauty but also that of pleasure. The Abbé Richard, in his translation of the *Letters of Alciphron*, has given us only extracts of the famous letter of Megara to Bacchis; but Publicola Chaussard has been less timorous, though his translation, which we reproduce in part, does not quite attain the audacity of the Greek text. It is the auletris Megara who is writing to the hetaira Bacchis, giving the latter the details of a magnificent feast at which her friends, Thessala, Thryallis, Myrrhine, Philumene, Chrysia and Euxippe had assisted, partly as hetairai and partly as flute players. "What a delicious repast! The mere telling of it should pique you with regret. What songs! What sallies! We emptied the beakers till sunrise. There were perfumes, crowns, wines the most exquisite, viands the most delicate. A shady wood of laurel was the festival hall. Nothing was lacking except you."

"Soon a dispute arose, but this merely added to our pleasure. It grew out of the question as to whether Thryallis or Myrrhine was the richer in that sort of beauty which gave to Venus the name of Callipyge. Myrrhine let her cincture fall; her tunic was transparent; she turned around, and one could believe that one was looking at lilies through crystal. She gave her loins a precipitous movement, and, looking backward, she smiled on that highly developed and voluptuous form which she was agi-

tating. Then, as if Venus herself had received her homage, she began murmuring some sweet sound or other which was still more moving. Thryallis, however, would not admit that she had been vanquished; she came forward and, without reserve: ‘I do not fight behind a veil; I wish to appear here as in a gymnastic exercise; this combat admits of no disguise!’ So saying, she let drop her tunic and, revealing her rival charms: ‘Contemplate,’ she said, ‘O Myrrhine, the slope of these loins, the whiteness and the fine texture of this skin, and these rose leaves which the hand of Pleasure has, as it were, scattered over these gracious contours, designed without a barren restraint and without exaggeration; in their rapid play, their amiable convulsions, these spheres you see here do not tremble like those of Myrrhine: their movement resembles rather the gentle movement of the waves.’ In this manner, she redoubled her lascivious crispations with so much agility that a universal applause decreed to her the triumphal honors. They passed on, then, to other contests: they disputed of beauty, but none dared vie with the firm, well-proportioned and polished belly of Philumene, who was ignorant of the labors of Lucina. The night flowed on with its pleasures; we ended with imprecations against our lovers and with a prayer to Venus, whom we conjured to procure us each day new adorers; for novelty is the most piquant charm of love. We were all drunken as we separated.”

Megara says, in her letter, that the suppers of the *hetairai* made a great noise in the world, and that the young Greeks were very curious to assist in these orgies, in which no other role than that of spectators was left them: but ordinarily, the most shameless courtesans did not desire that their secret debauches should be unveiled to the gaze of a man. Those who did not permit themselves to be attracted, at least by curiosity, to these scandalous and depraved excesses, were looked upon as ridiculous by their companions, and sometimes this remnant of modesty would give rise to the suspicion that they had certain infirmities to conceal. The flute players found no suspicion attaching to themselves

when they showed themselves nude in the practice of their trade; and so one could not attribute any other motive to their reserve in the matter of Lesbian love than a marked preference for the sentiments and pleasures of true love. This was the cause of unsparing railleries. "Should you be chaste enough to love but a single man?" wrote Magara to the young and gentle Bacchis, who had not desired to appear at these suppers of the unnatural women. "Are you ambitious to achieve a reputation for rare manners, while we are looked upon, all of us, as courtezans who give themselves to every comer?" Megara was one of the most debauched auletrides of her time, as Bacchis was the wisest of hetairai: "Your manners, my dear," wrote the hetaira Glycera to the latter, "your manners and your conduct are too respectable for the state in which we live!" This respectability of manners was even more rare among the auletrides than among the hetairai, though both were given to concentrating their attention on a single love affair, masculine or feminine, which often ruined them, and which never made them rich. It did not often happen that the two species of love were to be encountered to the same degree in a single woman; but this bizarre state of the heart and senses was sometimes to be seen among the auletrides, who were more sensual and more passionate than the simple hetairai. Lucian, in one of his *Dialogues of Courtezans*, shows us how a flute player might, at the same time, carry on two heterogeneous affairs, and die of love for a man even while she was giving herself without scruple to the love of a woman.

Ioesse, who has demanded no silver of Lysias, and who gives him no venal favors, sees herself suddenly abandoned by this lover to whom she has sacrificed the most advantageous chances. She who, happy in her disinterested affection, had lived with Lysias as chastely as Penelope, as she liked to boast, had lost, without knowing the reason, the affection of this young man, whom she had not led to deceive his father nor to rob his mother, in accordance with the detestable advice which was only too common among courtezans. She weeps, she sighs, she endeavors to soften

Lysias, who does not reply to her and who looks at her askance: "Last night," she says to him, "when you were emptying the goblets with Thrason and Dyphilus, the flute players, Cymbalium, and Pyrallis, my enemy, were called in. It made little difference to me that you kissed Cymbalium five times; in that you only humiliated yourself. But Pyrallis! I was surprised at all that went on between you; you called her attention to the goblet from which you were drinking, and, as you handed it to the slave to be refilled, you ordered him, in a low tone, to bear it refilled to Pyrallis. You were eating a fruit and, profiting by the inattention of Dypiles, who was occupied in his conversation with Thrason, you seized the moment and tossed the fruit into the lap of Pyrallis, who seized the offering, kissed it and hid it as a trophy." Lysias turns and goes his way. Pythia, companion and favorite friend of Ioesse, comes to console the latter and to mock her at the same time! "These men!" she cries disdainfully, "their pride grows with our unhappy passion!" Ioesse is in despair; and then, Pythia addresses herself to Lysias and attempts to reconcile him with her: "This weeping Ioesse, whom you defend, Pythia," replies Lysias bitterly, "alas! She has betrayed me, and I have surprised her couched with a young man." . . . "To begin with, is she not a courtezan?" replies Pythia, who finds the thing very simple. "But tell me, when did you surprise her?" . . . "Six days ago," the sighing Lysias tells her. "My father, who was not unaware of my passion for this virtuous girl, had locked me in the house, giving orders to the slave who watched the door not to open it unless ordered to do so. I, who could not make up my mind to pass the night afar from her, I called Drymon and made him stand against the wall at its lowest place, and I mounted on his shoulder and climbed over. I come to her house; the door is locked; it is midnight. I do not rap, but, undoing the door, (it is not the first time), I enter noiselessly. Every one is sleeping; I approach the wall on tip-toe and touch the bed. . . . 'Who is it?' murmurs Ioesse. O Ceres, I am dying! . . . I hear a sigh that does not come from one person," continues Lysias. "I thought

at first that she had slept with a slave girl, with Lyde. But it was quite otherwise, Pythia! My hand, seeking assurance, encountered the fine and tender skin of an adolescent, naked and exhaling the odors of perfumes, with his head tonsured. Oh! If only then my hand had held a sword, I . . . Why are you laughing, Pythia? Is it then so laughable? . . . ‘Lysias,’ cries Ioesse, ‘is this, then, the cause of your wrath? It was Pythia sleeping at my side!’ . . . ‘Why do you tell him, Ioesse?’ interrupts Pythia. . . . ‘Why not tell him?’ replies Ioesse, and adds: ‘Yes, my dear Lysias, it was Pythia! In the ennui of your absence, I had her come to me.’ . . . “You mean to tell me that shaved head was Pythia’s?” objected the incredulous Lysias. “In that case, your hair has grown prodigiously in six days.” . . . “She had it cut off after an illness,” responds Ioesse; “she lost her hair. That which she wears is not hers. Why do you not have Pythia show you and be convinced?” She was the stripling of whom Lysias was jealous!

The auletrides, in whom art and habit had singularly developed the voluptuous instincts, were not possessed, like the *hetairai*, of ambition to achieve a fortune: they had no love for money except to spend it, and they gained it so easily with their flutes that they had no need to resort to indecent methods. When they were executing their music and their dances, in the presence of guests at a feast, they became animated by the applause and experienced the desires which they had communicated to their auditors; but once the fumes of wine had been dissipated, they returned, so to speak, into the possession of their own free judgment, and they often refused with hauteur to put themselves up at auction like the courtezans. There were undoubtedly exceptions, but in such case a flute player estimated her wares as highly as the great *hetairai*. The note of Philumene to Criton informs us as to how high the tariff which a fashionable flute player placed upon her caresses might rise: “Why do you torment yourself and lose time in writing to me? I have need of fifty pieces of gold and not of your letters. If you love me, give them to me without

delay. If the demon of avarice or the spirit of perversity possesses you, do not tire me uselessly. Adieu!" Petala, whose correspondence with her lover, Simalion, we have viewed, was quite as positive a young woman as her companion, Philumene, but at least, she had the right to be somewhat exigent, since Simalion did not even give her the price of a robe and perfumes. "And I should be content with this outfit," she wrote to him, "to pass the days and nights at your side, while another without doubt shall have the kindness to look after my needs! . . . You weep! Oh! That will not last. I must have, by all means, another lover who will take care of me better, for I do not want to die of hunger!" She envies the lot of a flute player, Phylotis, whom the rich Meneclides loads with presents every day. "As for me, poor thing, I have for my lot not a lover but a weeper, who thinks he has done everything by sending me a few flowers, undoubtedly to adorn the tomb to which premature death will drive me, and of which he will be the cause. He would have nothing to say, if he did not tell me how he had wept all the night!"

These flute players, these dancers who were hired out for feasts and reunions of pleasure, were not possessed of a melancholy humor, and tears were not at all to their taste, at least when they were not in love; when this happened, they merely became more devoted and more sensitive than virgins and wives. They always had a smile on their lips, and they invited the guests to gaiety, to forgetfulness of their pains and to oblivion of the future. For this was one of the qualifications for their trade. A joyous character contributed not less to their vogue than their beauty and their talents; living in the midst of wine cups, they received their inspiration from Bacchus, and they seemed sometimes to follow the lessons of the Menades. Hence, that proverbial play of words which escapes a Greek poet: "One always finds Bacchus at the gate of Cytherea." They were received with delight in the houses to which they were summoned, and their appearance was a signal for an ebullient enthusiasm. They were, however, sometimes mistreated; drinking vases were hurled at

their heads, when they became the cause of a dispute among the guests; they were exposed, also, to certain brutalities against which the law did not protect them, since they were slaves or foreign women. Cohlis meets Parthenis all in tears, mutilated by blows, her garments in shreds, her flute broken; and this was the sorrowful story which Parthenis told her. Gorgus had sent for her to come to the house of his mistress, Crocale; this latter had given herself to Gorgus, who was a rich farmer of Enoe, giving Dinomacus, an Etolian soldier, who was not able to pay as dearly as she demanded, his conge. Gorgus, a simple man, good and easy-going, who had desired for a long time to possess Crocale, had sent her two talents (about 12,000 francs), which Dinomacus refused to take to the beauty. "They were then at table, with the doors closed," Parthenis relates between her sighs. "I was playing the flute, the meal had advanced and I was playing an air in the Lydian mode. My farmer friend arose to dance, Crocale applauding him. Everything was delicious, when we were interrupted by a great noise and the sound of cries; the door to the street was forced open, and eight robust young fellows, among whom was Dinomacus, burst into the room. Suddenly everything was in disorder; Gorgus was beaten and trampled under foot. Crocale was fortunate enough, I do not know how, to save herself by fleeing to the house of her neighbor, Thespiade. Then Dinomacus turned to me: 'Go to the devil!' he said. His heavy hands fell on my cheeks and broke my flute." Gorgus went to make a complaint before the tribunals, but Parthenis, who was not a citizen, did not even obtain an indemnity for her flute.

We have already cited a number of the names of auletrides, mingled with those of dicteriades and of hetairai; Sinope, or the *Abyss*; Synoris, or the *Lantern* were those of flute players. These flute players had no less opportunity than the other courtezans to win honor or shame through a soubriquet. But, in general, the nicknames which the public gave them suggested praise rather than satire; and so, are we to conclude from this that the auletrides were worth more than their rivals in the art of the volup-

tuary? Sysimbrion or the *Wild Thyme* exhaled, after she had done dancing, an odor which one would have said was that of an aromatic herb; Pyrallis, or the *Bird*, seemed to have wings when she danced; Parene, or the *Brilliant*, deserved this epithet above all when she was nude; Opora, or the *Autumn*, who had furnished the poet Alexis the subject and the character for a comedy, bore no other fruits than those of love; Paxis, or the *Lime-Twig*, even surpassed her reputation and never let the unfortunates who had become limed in her snares fly away; Thaluse, or the *Flowerly*, shone like a flower; Nicostrate, or the *Hair Dresser*, piqued herself on being a hermaphrodite; Philematium, or the *String* amused herself only in fishing for small fry; Sigea, or the *Promontory*, was celebrated for the shipwrecks of the most solid virtue which she had caused. Athenaeus cites, also, many auletrides whose names remained graved in the memory of lovers: Erenis, Euclea, Graminea, Hieroclea, Ionia, Lopadion, Meconida, Theolyte, Thryallis, etc. The *Dialogues* of Lucian and the *Letters* of Alciphron have immortalized some others; Plutarch himself has consecrated a memoir to the ardent Phormesium, who died in the arms of her lover or, according to a more authentic version, on the bosom of a mistress. But biographical details are lacking for the greater number of these celebrities of music and the dance. We merely know that Nemeade had taken the name of the Nemean games because she there had played the flute in honor of Hercules; we know that Phylire had plied the trade of a simple hetaira before coming an auletris; we know that the famous Simoethe inspired so much love in Alcibiades that he took her away from the Megarians and refused to give her back to them, a fact which was for Megara a public sorrow; we know that the young Antheia, who, to make use of the expressions of the poet who celebrated her, was as fresh as the flower whose name she bore, had ceased very soon to sacrifice to Venus; we know that Nanno, the mistress of Mimerme, had slain all her lovers without their weeping over it; finally, there has been preserved, in the *Anthology*, a Greek epigram which offers us the description

of a beauty contest in which the heroines desired to preserve their anonymity. This epigram is like a cry of admiration escaping the judges who had given the decision: "I have judged three callipyges. Letting me see, in the nude, their brilliant beauty, they took me for an umpire. One had apples of a dazzling whiteness and revealed little dimples, such as form in the cheeks of persons who smile, while the second, spreading her legs, revealed, on a skin as white as snow, colors more vermillion than those of roses. The third, putting on a tranquil air, excited on her delicate skin light undulations. If Paris, the judge of goddesses, had seen these callipyges, he would have had no more eyes for what Juno, Minerva and Venus had to show him."

But of all the Greek auletrides, the most famous by far was Lamia, who was passionately loved by Demetrius Polioscetes, king of Macedonia (three hundred years before Christ). She was an Athenian and the daughter of a certain Cleanor, whom she had left at an early age to go play the flute in Egypt; she played it so well that King Ptolemy took her in his service and kept her there a long time. But following a naval combat in which Demetrius dispersed the fleet of Ptolemy near the island of Cyprus, the ship on which Lamia was fell into the hands of the conqueror, who was taken with her at first sight, and who preferred her constantly thereafter to his youngest and most beautiful mistresses. Lamia was then more than forty years old, and as Plutarch affirms, she was no longer content with playing the flute; she practised openly the trade of courtesan. But from the day Demetrius honored her with his embraces, she repelled all the others: "Certainly, since that sacred night," she writes to her royal lover in an admirable letter, transcribed by Alciphron, "since that sacred night up to the present moment, I have done nothing which might render me unworthy of your kindness, even though you have given me unlimited power in disposing of myself. But my conduct has been without reproach and I do not permit any liaison. I do not deal with you as do the hetairai; I do not deceive you in the least, my sovereign, as they do. No, in

the name of Venus Artemis! Since that day, no one has written or addressed to me any propositions, for they fear you and respect you as the invincible one."

Lamia, as she says in her letter, had conquered by means of her flute this conqueror of cities. Demetrius had a number of mistresses who sought, one and the other, to supplant her in the favor of the king; their beauty, their youth, their graces and their spirit were the arms which they employed; but these arms possessed no prestige against Lamia. Her age, with which they unceasingly reproached her in their epigrams, was never visible to the eyes of Demetrius. The jealousy of Leena, of Chrysis, of Antipyra and of Demo grew in proportion to the love of the king for their rival. At a supper at which Lamia was playing the flute, Demetrius turned to Demo and ecstatically inquired: "And how are you?" . . . "Like an old woman," perfidiously replies Demo. Another time, Demetrius, who made no effort to conceal his preference for Lamia, says to Demo: "Do you see the fine flute she has sent me?" . . . "If you would pass the night with my mother," replied Demo bitterly, "my mother would show you a flute still more beautiful." Demetrius pretended not to hear. Lamia also forgave her rivals because she did not fear them, but she conceived, nevertheless, a lively resentment with regard to Leena, who had done all she could to betray her.

Machon, who cites Athenaeus, adding new obscenities to those of the Greek poet, initiates us into some of the amorous secrets of this old flute player; he says positively that Demetrius, in his mistress' bed, imagined that he still heard and was following with delight the cadence which charmed him during supper: *Ait demetrium ab incubante Lamia concinne suaviterque subagatum fuisse*; But this Latin version lacks the spice of the Greek. He says further that, of all the perfumes which Asia knew how to extract from plants, none was so agreeable to the nostrils of Demetrius as the impure emanations from the body of Lamia (*cum pudendum manu confricuisset ac digitis contrectasset*). Lamia, in her amorous furies, forgot that she was dealing with a

king and held him chained and breathless under the empire of her gleaming teeth. It was rumored that this was the origin of the nickname of Lamia, which signifies a *grub*, a species of female evil spirit which was accused of sucking the blood of sleeping persons. The ambassadors of Demetrius permitted themselves to make allusion to the love episodes of Lamia when, laughingly replying to Lysimachus, who had drawn their attention to the wounds which he had received in a terrible struggle with a lion: "Our master can also show you the bites which a still more redoubtable beast, a lamia, has imprinted on his neck!" Demetrius showed no less transport in his caresses. On returning from a voyage, he ran to embrace his father and took him in his arms with so much effusion that the old man cried: "One would think you were embracing Lamia!" It was said, in short, that Demetrius was loved by his mistresses but that he loved only Lamia. One day, however, he seemed to prefer Leena to her; but Lamia, throwing her arms about his neck, drew him gently to the couch, murmuring in his ear: "That's well enough! You shall have Leena, too, when you want her!" In erotic language, one of the most indecent mysteries of the trade of *hetairai* was called *heainan*, and Lamia, in pronouncing the name of her rival, was merely speaking of a lascivious posture which was better suited to her than to Leena. And so it was, the love of Demetrius for this old enchantress knew no bounds. Pleasantries about this love abounded without impairing it in the least; and the king of Macedonia, while admitting that Lamia was no longer young, insisted that the goddess Venus was still older, without being any the less adored. Lysimachus, in his savage kingdom of Thrace, made mockery of the voluptuous manners of the court of Demetrius, whom he would one day have to combat and dethrone: "That great king," he said, "has no fear of ghosts nor of grub worms, since he sleeps with Lamia." The epigram was reported to Demetrius, who replied: "The court of Lysimachus is like a comic theatre; one sees there only persons with two-syllable names, such as Paris, Bithes and how many other buffoons."

Lysimachus wanted the last word: "My comic theatre is more respectable than his tragic theatre; you do not see in it either a flute player or a courtezan." . . . "My courtezan," replied Demetrius, "is more chaste than his Penelope!" And they became, from then on, irreconcilable enemies.

Lamia, in order to captivate thus the king of Macedonia, made profit of the day and night with marvelous art; at night, she forced her lover to admit that she had no equal; by day, she wrote him charming letters; she amused him with lively and witty replies; she inebriated him with the sound of her flute; above all, she flattered him: "Puissant King," she wrote to him, "you permit an *hetaira* to address letters to you, and you think it not unworthy of yourself to devote a few moments to my letters, because you have consecrated yourself to my person! My sovereign, when, out of my house, I hear of or see you, adorned with a diadem, surrounded by guards, armies and ambassadors, then, in the name of Venus Aphrodite! then I tremble and am afraid; then I turn my glance away from you, as I turn it away from the sun in order not to be blinded; it is then I recognize in you Demetrius, the vanquisher of cities. How terrible and warlike is your look! I scarcely can believe my eyes and I say to myself: O Lamia, is that truly the man whose bed you share?" Demetrius had overthrown the Greeks before Ephesus, and Lamia celebrated this victory with her flute, by singing: "The lions of Greece have become foxes at Ephesus." Demetrius despised the Athenians whom he had conquered and detested the Spartans whom he had subdued. "The execrable Lacedaemonians, for all they have the appearance of being true men," Lamia wrote to him, "never cease, in their deserts and on their Taygetus, to cast reproach on our splendid feasts and to oppose to your urbanity the grossness of Lycurgus." Lamia often had the happiest whims. One night, at a supper, there came talk of the judgment attributed to Bocchoris, King of Egypt; a young Egyptian, lacking the sum which an *hetaira* named Thonis had demanded of him, invoked the gods, who sent him in a dream what the beautiful girl had refused him

in reality; Thonis learned of this and claimed her wages. Then came a suit before the tribunal of Bocchoris. The King heard both sides and then ordered the young man to count out the sum which Thonis demanded, to place it in a vase, and to pass the vase under the eyes of the courtezan in order to prove to her that imagination was a shadow of the truth. "What do you think, Lamia, of this judgment?" says Demetrius. . . . "I find it unjust," at once replies Lamia, "for the shadow of that silver did not assuage the desire of Thonis, while the dream did satisfy the passion of her lover."

Demetrius paid like a king; when he was master of Athens, he demanded of the Athenians the sum of two hundred and fifty talents (near two million francs in our money), and he caused this duty to be levied with a singular rigor, as though he had need of the amount on the spot. And then, when it had been gathered with great pain: "Let them give it to Lamia," he says, "to buy her soap!" The Athenians revenged themselves for this odious exaction by spreading a report that Lamia must have a very dirty body since she needed so much soap for her toilet. Lamia was already very rich, but she spent like a queen. She caused to be constructed superb edifices, among others the Poecile of Sicyone, of which the poet Polemon published the description. She gave for Demetrius feasts, the magnificence of which surpassed all that history has to tell of those of the kings of Babylon and Persia. There was one which cost fabulous sums and which was also hymned by Polemon. "I am sure," Lamia wrote to Demetrius, "that the feast which I am planning to give in your honor in the house of Therippudios at the fete of Aphrodite will attract attention not only in the city of Athens but throughout the whole of Greece." Plutarch affirms that she levied contributions on all the officers of Demetrius, under pretext of covering the cost of the repast, but that she at the same time had herself reimbursed by the King and by the Athenians. Although an Athenian by birth, she spared neither the purse nor the self-respect of her fellow-citizens. When death had struck her down in the midst of her

orgies, Demetrius Poliorcetes wept for her, and the Athenians apotheosized her, erecting a temple to her under the name of Venus Lamia. Demetrius, indignant at so much baseness, exclaimed that one would no longer see in the lower regions a single great-hearted Athenian. "No," remarked the cruel Demo, "he would be careful not to go there for fear of meeting Lamia."

## CHAPTER X

“WE HAVE,” says Demosthenes, in his plea against Neera, “we have courtezans (*hetairas*) for pleasure, concubines (*palladides*) for daily use, and wives to give us legitimate children and to grow old faithfully in the interior of the house.” This precious passage from the Greek orator initiates us into the whole system of Greek manners, which tolerated the use of concubines and courtezans at the very door of the conjugal sanctuary. The concubines, on the subject of whom we find very little information in the Greek writers, were slaves who had been bought or servants who were rented, and whose duty it was, at need, to serve and satisfy the senses of their master; there was, in their case, neither love nor libertinism; it was a simple service, although of a more delicate nature than any other. And so it was, a legitimate wife did not deign to be offended, nor even to be astonished, at beholding, under her eyes and in her own house, servant maids or slave girls committing an act of servitude or submission by abandoning themselves to her husband. She herself, reduced to a state of inferiority and obedience in marriage, was not concerned in meddling with things of this sort which did not concern her, since nothing could come of such alliances but bastards. The concubines constituted, thus, an essential part of the domestic domicile; they had a definite and, in a manner, an authorized role in the case of sickness, accouchement and other mischances of the true wife. Their existence flowed along silently in the shadow of the domestic hearth, and they grew old ignored in the midst of manual labors, even though they had given sons to their masters, sons who possessed no family rights, it is true, and who were by their very birth disinherited of the title of citizen.

The courtesans formed a class absolutely different from that of the concubines, filling, however, an analogous function in the economy of civil life; they were the instruments of pleasure for married men. Their destination had been sanctioned by usage and custom, if not by law, and, under the general term of courtesan, was included, at once, all the species of hetairai, not excluding the auletrides and the dicteriades. Nevertheless, there was a distinction between the public woman, properly so-called (*pornes*) and the hetairai, of whom Anaxilis gives us, so to speak, this definition in his comedy of the *Monotropos*: "A young woman who speaks with restraint, according her favors to those who come to her with their needs of nature, has been named an hetaira, or good friend, on account of her hetairism or good friendship." The origin of the word hetaira is not doubtful, and one sees from many passages in Greek authors that this word, decent enough at first, had ended by undergoing the vissitudes of a vicious application. It is certain that, long before the progress of erotic hetairism, women and girls of free condition called their intimate acquaintances and their best friends hetairai (*philas hetairas*). The tradition of the word had been perpetuated from the time of Latone and Niobe, who cherished each other like two hetairai, according to the expression of Greek mythology. It is true that, afterwards, Sappho in the same manner described her Lesbians: "I shall sing of beautiful things to my hetairai!" she says in her poems. The true sense of the word *hetaira* had commenced to be altered. It was still respectable enough for the poet Antiphanes to be able to say, in his *Hydra*: "This man had for neighbor a young girl. He had no sooner seen her than he became enamored of this fair citizen, who had neither tutor nor parent. She was, moreover, a girl who displayed the most respectable tendency, a true hetaira (*ontos hetaira*)."<sup>1</sup> Athenaeus also speaks of those who are true hetairai, who are capable, he says, of giving a sincere friendship and who, alone among all women, have received the name of friendship itself (*hetaireia*), or the very nickname of Venus, whom the Ath-

nians have entitled *Hetaira*.” The word soon lost its first acceptance, and was left as exclusive property to the women who were, in effect, facile friends to all the world. There are, however, frequent errors in the application of the word, and grammarians thought to remedy this by modifying the accent, a theme on which the poet, Menander, plays in this fashion: ‘What you have made,’ he says, “is not something proper to friends (*hetairon*), but to courtezans (*hetairon*).” One sees, at once, the path the word had traveled in losing its original and respectable sense, when one hears the poet Ephippus in his comedy entitled the *Commerce*, describing in these terms the caresses of the good *friends*: “She kisses him without closing her lips, but with a gaping mouth like the birds, and she makes him very gay.”

These *good friends*, among whom we shall not classify the dictieriades, the auletrides and the subordinate *hetairai*, or vagabond courtezans, occupied at Athens a place of honor at the great banquet of Prostitution. They dominated and eclipsed the decent women. They had clients and flatterers; they exercised a permanent influence over political events by influencing the men who mingled with them; they were, as it were, the queens of Attic civilization. One might divide them into two distinct classes, which had certain reciprocal characteristics: the *familiars* and the *philosophs*. These two classes, equally interested and equally sought after, constituted the aristocracy of prostitutes. Philosophs, from living in the society of savants and men of letters, learned to imitate the jargon of the latter and to take delight in their studies; the familiars, less well informed or less pedantic, also commended themselves by their quality of mind and served equally to charm the eminent men whom they had attracted by their beauty or by their reputation. Each of these great *hetairai* kept her court and had her cortege of adorers, of poets, captains and artists; each had her friendships and her hatreds; each her own credit and power. It was under Pericles, and by his example, that the Athenians became passionately fond of these sirens and magicians, who did much harm to manners and much

good to letters and the arts. During this period of time, it might be said that there were no other women in Greece, and that the virgins and the matrons kept themselves hidden in the mysterious depths of the domestic gynaeceum, while the *hetairai* filled the theatre and the public place. These *hetairai* were for the most part fallen female citizens, of cosmopolitan beauty and talents.

The preference which Athenians of distinction showed for these women over their legitimate wives is only too well understood when one compares the two classes, when one takes into account the disenchantment which accompanied, almost always, the intimate relations of a husband with his wife. That which constituted the prestige of an *hetaira* was the shame of a married woman. That which constituted the glory of the latter would have been a cause for ridicule in the former. The one represented pleasure, the other duty; the one belonged to the interior of the house and the other beyond its walls. Both kept within the narrow limits of their role, without any desire to encroach on the domain of the other. The old poet Simonides took pleasure in sketching the portrait of the good woman, whom he supposes to have come from the bee: "Happy the mortal who finds one for a wife!" he says. "In her heart alone, among all others, vice has no access; she assures her husband a long and tranquil life, growing old with him in the most touching accord; mother of a numerous family in which she delights, distinguished among other women to whom she is a glorious example, one does not see her wasting time in vain conversations. Modesty reigns in her remarks and appears to give a greater brilliancy to the graces which are hers and which she spreads over all her occupations." Now these occupations consisted in the needs of the menage, in needlework and in the functions of wife, mother, or nurse. Simonides enumerates nine other species of women whom he supposes to have been created out of the elements of the pig, the fox, the dog, the monkey, the mare, the cat and the ass; it was, according to this gross satiric poet, among these diverse species that one must look for the *hetairai*.

"The name of a decent woman," says Plutarch, "should be, like her person, shut up in the house." Thucydides had expressed the same idea a long time before: "The best woman is she of whom one speaks neither good nor evil." This maxim sums up the sort of life which the Athenian matron led. She did not leave the house; she appeared neither at the public games nor at theatrical performances; she did not show herself in the street unless veiled and decently clad, under pain of a fine of one thousand drachmas, imposed by magistrates called *ginecomi*, who posted up the sentence on the plane-tree of the Ceramicus. She indulged in no reading, she had no instruction, she spoke her own language badly and she understood nothing of the refinements of politeness, the variations of fashion, the most simple notions of philosophy. She inspired, thus, in her husband no feeling beyond cold or tender esteem. A husband who permitted himself to love his wife with transports and voluptuous pleasure would have been blamed by everybody, in accordance with the axiom formulated by Plutarch: "One cannot live with a respectable wife as though she were a wife and an *hetaira* at one and the same time." The empire of the married woman ended at the door of the house, where that of her husband commenced; she had, therefore, no right to follow him or to trouble him in his exterior life, and she was forced to ignore what passed outside her home. Under certain circumstances, by virtue of an ancient law which had fallen into desuetude, she might complain to the magistrates and demand a divorce, if the excesses of her husband had become insupportable. Thus, Hipparete, the chaste wife of Alcibiades, whom she loved and whose inconstancy desolated her, seeing that her libertine husband deserted her to frequent strange women of an evil life, retired to the house of her brother and claimed a divorce. Alcibiades took the thing gaily, and declared that his wife must lay before the archon her grounds for divorce; she came there and Alcibiades also, but in place of justifying himself, the latter carried away in his arms the weeping plaintiff, whom he took back to the conjugal domicile. Ordinarily, the matrons did

not weep from fear of abdicating their dignity. The only privilege of which they were jealous was the legitimacy of their children, the issues of legal marriage. Demosthenes besought the Areopagus to condemn the courtezan Neera: "So that decent women might not be placed on the same level with the prostitute; so that women citizens, wisely reared by their parents and married according to the law, might not be confounded with a strange woman who, many times a day, gave herself to many men in all the most infamous fashions according to the desire of each."

The hetairai had, then, certain invincible advantages over married women; they did not appear except at a distance, it is true, at the religious ceremonies; they took no part in the sacrifices; they did not give birth to citizens; but how many sweet and proud compensations for the vanity of woman! They were objects of ornament at the solemn games, the warlike exercises, the scenic representations; they alone rode in chariots adorned like queens, brilliant in silk and gold, their breasts nude, their heads uncovered; they composed the audience of the elite at the sessions of the tribunal, at the oratorical contests, at the assemblages of the Academy; they applauded Phidias, Apelles, Praxiteles and Zeuxis, after having furnished them inimitable models. They inspired Euripides and Sophocles, Menander, Aristophanes and Eupolis by encouraging them to contend for the theatric palm. In the most difficult circumstances one was not afraid to be guided by their counsels; one repeated everywhere their bon mots; one feared their criticisms; one was avid of their praise. Despite their habitual manners, despite the scandal attaching to their trade, they paid homage to fine actions, noble works, great characters, sublime talents. Their blame or their approbation was a recompense or a chastisement which was usually true and just. Their charming minds, cultivated and flourishing, created about them an emulation of the beautiful and a quest of the good; spread lessons in taste and perfected letters, sciences, and the arts by illuminating them with the fires of love. This was their strength, this was their seduction. Admired and loved, they ex-

cited their adorers to render themselves worthy of them. Undoubtedly, they were the cause of much debauchery, of much prodigality, of much madness; sometimes, they relaxed their manners, they degraded certain public virtues, they weakened characters and depraved souls; but at the same time, they gave an impetus to generous thoughts, to honorable acts of patriotism and courage, to works of genius, to rich inventions in poetry and art.

Their influence was especially beneficent against an odious and despicable vice which, coming originally from Crete, had been propagated throughout all Greece and even in the depths of Asia. The author of the *Voyage d' Anacharsis* says with reason that the laws protected the courtesans in order to correct more scandalous excesses. These amicable liaisons of the young Greeks degenerated ordinarily, except at Sparta, into infamous debaucheries, which habit had carried over into manners and which unworthy philosophers were so base as to encourage. Solon had already founded his famous dictoron and taxed to the amount of one obole the public service which was to be found there, in order to furnish the tastes of the dissolute Athenians with a facile distraction, and to bring a moral opposition into the shameful disorders of antiphysical love; but this opposition was far more active and powerful when the hetairai were charged with establishing it. They caused to blush those who approached them after having been soiled in an unclean commerce reproved by nature; they employed all the artifices of coquetry in order to be preferred to the young boys who served as auxiliaries to the most abominable Prostitution; but they did not always possess the advantage over these effeminate, with their hairless chins, flowing locks, polished nails and perfumed feet. There were certain incorrigible perversities, and the debauchees who were most enthusiastic in paying the hetairai homage reserved a part of their sensual appetites for another cult. Opinion, unfortunately, did not come to aid the admonitions and the good example of the courtesans, who in vain sought to reprove the unclean practices which the indulgence of men tolerated. Every day, at Athens and at Corinth,

the slave merchants brought handsome young hoys who had no other merit than their figures and their physical beauty; the price of these slaves did not cause those of the hetairai to drop, but they were often purchased at a dear enough figure, to be given in the house the employment of concubines. Public decency and conjugal modesty did not wax indignant over this abomination. As to the young citizens who, like Alcibiades, by their bodily graces and their seductive physiognomies, excited many ignoble passions, they were honored in place of being spit upon; they occupied first place in the games; they wore habits of precious stuff which made them easily recognizable; they received as they passed the striking homage of public immorality. They were the rivals whom the hetairai constantly endeavored to dethrone or to deface. This was a triumph of corruption against which the hetairai protested unceasingly. When Alcibiades had himself painted with two faces, so to speak, nude and receiving the crown at the Olympic games, nude and again a conqueror upon the knees of the flute player Nemea, the hetairai of Athens formed a league to obtain the exile of this Adonis, who was so prejudicial to their cause. They limited themselves sometimes to combating their adversaries with contempt and ridicule. In a *Dialogue* of Lucian, an auletris, Drose, is deprived of her lover, the young Clinias; it is Aristenetes, "the most infamous of philosophers," who has taken him away: "What!" cries Chelidonium, "that frowning and bristling face, that beard of a goat, whom one sees walking with a crowd of young fellows in the Poecile!" Drose tells him then that for three days Aristenetes, who is beside himself over this innocent, has been promising to elevate him to the gods, and has been making him read the obscene *Colloquies* of the ancient philosophers: "In a word," she says, "he is besieging the poor young man!" "Courage! We shall take him away," replies Chelidonium; "I am going to write on the walls of the Ceramicus: 'Aristinete is the corrupter of Clinias.' "

The hetairai fled thus those philosophers who so corrupted the youth, but they sought after those who held to a philosophy less

hostile to women. They made even more to do over poets and comic authors, because they shared, in a manner, in the success of the latter: "What would Menander be without Glycera?" writes this witty *hetaira* to the great Greek comic poet. "What other would serve you as I, who prepare your masks, give you your habits, who know how to appear at the proper time in the *proscenium*, to take the applause from whatever side it comes, and to determine it by a proper clapping of the hands?" The poets and comic authors were not rich, and they could only pay in verses the favors which were accorded them; but these verses at least added to the celebrity of the one who had inspired them, and she was likewise sure of escaping the sarcasms of the poet: "I bey you, my dear Menander," wrote the same Glycera, "to place among your favorite pieces the comedy in which you make me play the principal role, so that, if I do not accompany you to Egypt, it will still make me known at the court at Ptolemy and teach that King the empire which I hold over my lover." This comedy bore the very name of Glycera. Other courtezans wished at least to have their name as the title of a comedy, and one sees Anaxilas, Eubulus and others lending themselves to the caprices of their mistresses. As to the philosophers, who did not possess similar means of making these capricious beauties illustrious, and putting them in the mode, they were treated by the latter with less regard, and if the *hetairai* did not laugh at their noses, if they did not pull their beards, they did often turn their backs on them, especially when the wise men talked too much: "Shall we," wrote Thais to Euthydemus, "shall we who do not know what causes the formation of clouds or what are the properties of atoms, shall we appear to you beneath the sophists? Know, then, that I have wasted my time in learning the secrets of your philosophy, and that I have reasoned it out with perhaps as much knowledge as your master." It was, moreover, Aristotle to whom Thais dared make a face, accusing him of having a feigned aversion to women: "Do you think," she says, "there is so much difference between a sophist and a courtezan? If there is, it is only in the means which they employ in persuading; the one and the

other have the same object: to receive.” She wanted to wager with Euthydemes that she would exhaust in one night that factitious austerity and that she would force even Aristotle to be content with *ordinary pleasures*. The courtezans were always in dispute with the philosophers, with whom they would reconcile themselves only to become embroiled anew. Their great grief against philosophy appears to have been, above all, its indulgence toward or penchant for *extraordinary amours*.

If the philosophers lacked strength of soul to resist the attractions of the courtezans, one should not be astonished that the great men of Greece yielded equally to those seductions. Very few might be cited who remained masters of themselves in the presence of all the enchantments of beauty, grace, mind and education. Kings, also, laid their diadems at the feet of these charming conquerors, in the manner of Gyges, king of Lydia, who, weeping for a Lydian courtezan, whom he judged to be incomparable, caused to be erected to her a pyramidal tomb, so lofty that one perceived it from all points of his States. Among the kings whom the Greek courtezans subjugated with the most adroitness, we have already cited the names of the Ptolemies of Egypt. Alexander the Great, who took with him on his expedition the Athenian Thais, appears to have left to his successors, along with his vast empire, a taste for Grecian *hetairai* and Ionian flute players. Some of his favorites, cleverer or more fortunate than their fellows, succeeded in getting him to marry them. Thus, after the death of Alexander, Thais, whom he had almost apotheosized in the act of loving her, married one of his generals, Ptolemy, King of Egypt, who had by her three children. The *hetairai*, however, were not well fitted for furnishing a numerous progeny; the majority of them were sterile. History mentions, nevertheless, a number of illustrious men who had courtezans for mothers: Philetaires, king of Pergamos, was the son of Boa, a Paphlagonian flute player; the Athenian general Timotheus, was the son of a courtezan of Thrace; the philosopher Bion was the son of an *hetaira* of Lacedaemonia, and the great Themistocles was the son of Abrotone, a *dicteriade* whose price was one obole.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE origin and progress of hetairism must be attributed above all to the Greek courtesans entitled philosophs, for the reason that they followed the lessons of the philosophers and served the latter in their amours. The philosophic hetairai had, in a manner, placed Prostitution under the aegis of philosophy, and all those women who, from temperament, from cupidity or from idleness, abandoned themselves to the disorders of an immodest life, might find authorization in the example and the performances of Sappho, of Aspasia, and of Leontium. There were, without doubt, many hetairai who distinguished themselves in the different schools of philosophy, but history has given us but ten or twelve names, which are the only ones in more than three centuries to represent the dogmas and the cult of hetairism, if one may apply this word to the philosophic system of Prostitution. This system appears to us to have had four forms and four distinct phases, which we shall name *Lesbian*, *Socratic*, *Cynic* and, lastly, *Epicurean*. It may be seen from these arbitrary definitions that Sappho, Socrates, Diogenes and Epicurus are the patrons, if not the authors, of those doctrines which the philosophic hetairai took it upon themselves to propagate in their erotic domains. Sappho preached the love of women; Socrates spiritual love; Diogenes a grossly physical love; Epicurus a voluptuous love. These were the four forms of love in the propagation of which the courtesans of philosophy shared, and which afterwards found proselytes in greater or less numbers among those familiar hetairai to whom belonged the supreme direction of public pleasures.

The most ancient philosoph who has left a trace in the legend of the Greek courtesans is Megalostrate of Sparta, who was loved by the poet Alcman, and who philosophized, poetized and made

love six hundred and seventy-four years before Christ. Her philosophy was purely amorous, and it is permissible to look upon her as the prelude to Epicureanism. Alcman, according to the testimony of Athenaeus, was the prince of erotic poets, and since he was also the most fiery pursuer of women, (*erga mulieres petulantissimum*, says the Latin version, which, however, does not say everything), we may understand how he was, also, the grossest eater which antiquity may claim the honor of having produced. He spent at table his days and his nights, with Megalostrate couched at his side, and he sang unceasingly a hymn to love, which Megalostrate repeated in unison. In an epigram of this poet, an epigram cited by Plutarch, the joyous Alcman remarks, between two libations, that if he had been reared in Sarda, the native land of his ancestors, he would have become a poor priest of Cybele, deprived of his virile parts; whereas he was now superior to the kings of Lydia in his role of citizen of Lacedaemonia and lover of Megalostrate. After this fine philosophy, which did not prevent her dear Alcman from dying devoured by lice, there is a sort of lacuna in the erotic philosophy. Sappho of Mitylene invents Lesbian love and proclaims it superior to that with which women had been content up till then. Sappho had not always been of this mind, and she was not always of this mind yet. She had been married, at first, to a rich inhabitant of the isle of Andros, Cercala, and she had by him a son whom she called Cleis, after the name of her mother; but becoming a widow, she became persuaded, by reason of her disordered sensual imagination, that each sex should concentrate upon itself and seek extinction in a sterile embrace. She was a poet, she was a philosopher; her discourses, her poetry, won her many partisans, especially among the women, who listened only too well to her evil counsels. Although Plato gratifies her with the epithet of *beautiful*, and although Athenaeus is persuaded of her beauty on the authority of Plato, it is more probable that Maximus of Tyre, who paints her for us as little and black, is in conformity with the most authentic tradition. Ovid shows her in no other fashion, and

the learned Madame Dacier fills in the portrait of this illustrious Lesbian by telling us that she had eyes extremely lively and brilliant. Moreover, Horace, by giving her the description of *mascula*, repeated by Ausonius in the same sense, conforms to a generally received opinion, which would have Sappho to have been an hermaphrodite, as facts appeared to prove.

Undoubtedly, the poetess Sappho, born of a distinguished family of Lesbos, and possessing an honorable fortune, did not prostitute herself for money, but she did keep a school of Prostitution, in which the young girls of her *gynæceum* early learned to make an unnatural employment of their nascent charms. There has been a futile effort to rehabilitate the manners and the doctrine of Sappho; the famous ode, which has come down to us among the fragments of her poetry, is enough to prove to the most incredulous that, if Sappho was not an hermaphrodite, she was at least an unnatural woman. (*Diversis amoribus est diffamata*, says Lilio Gregorio Giraldi in one of his *Dialogues*, *adeo ut vulgo tribas vocaretur.*) This ode, this *chef-d'œuvre* of hysterical passion, depicts the burning fever, the ecstasy, the pains, the languors, the disorders and even the last crisis of that passion which is more delirious, more unbridled than all the other loves. The name of the Lesbian woman to whom the Sapphic ode was addressed is unknown. The frigid Boileau Despreaux has rendered the movement and the color of this ode with more warmth and art than is his current custom:

Hereux qui près de toi pour toi seule soupire,  
Qui jouit de plaisir de t'entendre parler,  
Qui te voit quelquefois doucement lui sourire!  
Les dieux, dans son bonheur, peuvent-ils l'égaler?

Je sens de veine en veine une subtile flamme  
Courir par tout mon corps, sitôt que je te vois;  
Et dans les doux transports où s'égare mon âme,  
Je ne saurais trouver de langue ni de voix.

Un nuage confus se répand sur ma vue,  
 Je n'entends plus, je tombe en de molles langueurs;  
 Et pâle, sans haleine, interdite, éperdue,  
 Un frison me saisit, je tombe, je me meurs!\*

There has been an inappropriate attempt to find a tribute to Phaon in the sentiments which Sappho expresses in this admirable piece, which so causes us to regret the loss of her other works; but, from one end to the other, the ode is addressed to a person of the feminine sex. One is thus reduced to the necessity of leaving its object nameless amid the school of Sappho, which included as pupils or lovers Amycthene, Athys, Anachthoria, Thelesylle, Cydno, Eunica, Gongyle, Anagora, Mnais, Phyrrine, Cyrne, Andromede, Megara, etc. Whoever was the one who inspired the sublime ode for the preservation of which we are indebted to the rhetorician Longinus, this ode, which offers a description so faithful and so true of the Sapphic fever, was looked upon by medical science of antiquity as a diagnostic monument to this affection. The Abbé Barthélémy, in his *Voyage d'Anacharsis*, limits himself to saying that Sappho "loved her pupils to excess, because she was not able to love otherwise." Nature, as a matter of fact, had sketched in her the outlines of the masculine organ while developing that of her own sex. It was, they tell us, the incestuous love of her brother Charaxus, it was the rivalry with which she met on the part of an Egyptian courtezan

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\*A translation (of the French poem) is subjoined:

Happy, who by your side sighs but for you,  
 Who loves to hear you speak and loves to see  
 You smile on her! O gods, if this be true,  
 Can you know happiness so great as we?

I feel, from vein to vein, a subtle fire  
 Run through my body, when I see your face;  
 And as my soul drowns sweetly in desire,  
 My tongue and voice can find no speaking grace.

A confused cloud rests over all my sight;  
 I hear no more but, warm and languid, fall;  
 Breathless and pale, forbidden, under blight,  
 Trembling, I sink and, sinking, that is all.

named Rhodopis, it was, above all, the triumph of her rival which led Sappho to seek a new manner of loving. She lived, from then on, in the company of her Lesbians, forgetting that men were protesting against such actions, until Venus, to punish her, sent Phaon to her. She loved him at once, and she never wholly succeeded in overcoming the contempt of this handsome and indifferent young man. Pliny relates that this legitimate love sprang from a singular source: Phaon had found in his path a root of the white eryngium at the moment Sappho happened to be passing. The old translator of Pliny explains in these terms this curious passage of the *Natural History*: "There are those who say that the root of the white eryngium (which is very rare) is formed in the manner of the organs of a man or a woman; and it is held that if a man meets one made in the manner of his own member, he shall be well loved by women, and there is an opinion that it was this alone which induced the young Sappho to form a friendship for Phaon." This *friendship* was such that Sappho, driven to despair by the coldness of Phaon, hurled herself into the sea, from the top of the rock of Leucadia, in order to extinguish the flame of love with her life. She had, unfortunately, instructed her pupils too well for them to renounce their first loves, and her philosophy, which was but the quintessence of Lesbian love, never ceased to have its initiates, particularly among the courtezans. Some among them, in order to escape the pursuits of men whom they found amiable, also hurled themselves from the Leucadian Rock, in order to cure themselves of a passion which Sappho regarded as a shame and a servitude.

The school of Sappho, fortunately for the human species, was never more than an exception, powerless to prevail against true love. The hetaira Leena, the philosoph, who is not to be confounded with the favorite of Demetrius Poliorcetes, had not been perverted by the contradictory spirit of the Lesbians; she practiced, frankly and honorably, her trade of courtezan at Athens; she was the friend and mistress of Harmodius and of Aristogiton; she conspired with them against the tyrant Pisistratus and his son,

Hippias, five hundred and fourteen years before the modern era. She was taken and put to the torture, and they endeavored to force her to name her accomplices and to reveal the secrets of the conspiracy; but she, in order to be sure of keeping this secret, bit off her tongue with her teeth and spit it into the face of her executioners. There is a belief that she perished in these torments. The Athenians, to honor her memory, erected a monument to her, a bronze lioness without a tongue, which was placed at the entrance to the temple in the citadel at Athens. This was not the only act of proud courage which the annals of the Greek courtesans had to offer. Another philosoph, Cleonice, an hetaira of Byzantium, became known for her beauty and for her various writings on morality. It was this reputation which won for her the preference of Pausanias, son of Cleombrotus, King of Sparta. This general demanded that the beautiful philosoph be sent to him in order to distract him in the fatigues of war. Cleonice arrived at the camp by night, while Pausanias was asleep; she would not permit them to awake him; she merely caused the lamps about the sleeping general to be extinguished, advancing in the darkness toward the couch of the Prince, who, leaping up at the noise of an overturned lamp and believing himself in the presence of an assassin, seized his dagger and plunged it into her breast. After this fatal mischance, he saw again, each night, the phantom of Cleonice, who reproached him for his involuntary murder; he sought in vain to appease and win pardon from her; but she announced that he would only be delivered from this bloody apparition by returning to Sparta. He returned, but only to die of hunger in the temple of Minerva, where he had taken refuge to escape the vengeance of his fellow citizens, who accused him of treason (470 years before Christ).

The era of courtesans began in Greece at the time Cleonice joined the seductions of love to the instructions of philosophy. Another philosoph of the same sort, Thargelia of Miletus, had been charged with a mission as difficult as it was delicate for Xerxes, King of Persia, who was meditating the conquest of

Greece; this *hetaira*, as remarkable for her mind and education as for her beauty and her graces, served as a political instrument to Xerxes; it was her duty to win for him the principal Greek cities by inspiring love in the chiefs who defended them; she succeeded, as a matter of fact, in this first part of her gallant mission: she captivated, in succession, fourteen chiefs, who were her lovers without desiring to be the servants of the king of Persia. The latter, entering Greece by the passage of Thermopylae, was obliged to take by assault those cities the possession of which Thargelia believed she had assured him. Thargelia had settled at Larisse, and the King of Thessaly had married her; she ceased to be an *hetaira*, but she remained a philosoph. The high destiny of this courtezan excited the ambition of another Milesian, who soon eclipsed her in the career of letters and in fortune. Aspasia, originally of Miletus, like Thargelia, after having been a dicteriade at Megara, married Pericles, the illustrious head of the republic of Athens.

She came to Athens toward the middle of the fifth century before the modern era; she came there with a brilliant cortege of *hetairai* whom she had instructed, and whose operations she cleverly directed. These *hetairai* were not foreign slave girls wise only in the art of pleasure; they were young Greek maidens of free condition, reared in the lessons of that philosophy which their eloquent instructor professed, and initiated into all the mysteries of the most refined gallantry. Aspasia, also, had means of seduction which were always ready for all circumstances, and she exercised, through her pupils, an influence which she did not deign to wield through her own resources. She opened her school and there taught rhetoric; the most considerable citizens were her auditors and her admirers. Pericles, who was greatly taken with this philosoph, brought into her suite not only generals, orators, poets, all the eminent men of the republic, but also the wives and daughters of citizens, whom the love of rhetoric rendered indulgent toward everything else. They went there “to hear her devise,” says Plutarch, in the naïve transla-

tion of Jacques Amyot, the almoner of Charles IX and Bishop of Auxerre, "keeping a suite which was none too respectable, since she had in her house young lassies who made gain with their bodies." It was in this manner that she succeeded in captivating Pericles, who loved her to the point of passion, and who was not indifferent to the ragouts of debauchery which she prepared for him. Aspasia showed herself everywhere in public, at the theater, at the tribunal, at the lyceum, on the promenade, as a queen surrounded by her court; she established for herself, thus, a royalty rarer and less heavy to bear than all the others; she alone gave tone to the fashions; she alone dictated laws to the Athenians, and even to the Athenian women, regarding everything which concerned their costumes, their language, their opinions and even their manners, for she had placed hetairism in honor and given to it, so to speak, her own original touch. The young Greek women, despite their birth, descended from the rank of citizens to that of courtezan and proclaimed themselves philosophs after the example of Aspasia.

Pericles, before loving Aspasia, had loved Chrysilla, daughter of Teleus of Corinth; but this first love had usurped his conjugal union. From the time he knew Aspasia, he thought only of breaking his marriage in order to contract a new one with her. He then induced his wife to consent to a divorce and, by remarrying, was able to introduce into his house the beautiful philosoph, who in the taverns was called the *dicteriade of Megara*. Pericles was very amorous, but he was not jealous; he permitted Aspasia to go on keeping the company of Socrates and Alcibiades, who had possessed her before him: "He never went to the Senate," reports Plutarch, "and he never came back from there without giving a kiss to his Aspasia." Commentators have not deigned to occupy themselves with this daily kiss at departure and return; they have supposed that it was as tender as Pericles was capable of making it. Finally, Aspasia dwelt alone with Socrates or Alcibiades and she did not devote herself solely to philosophy while waiting for Pericles. The conversation among our philoso-

phers would turn upon erotic subjects, and one regrets to learn that this charming woman tolerated and even encouraged in her two friends the most repulsive conduct. Plato has preserved for us a fragment of dialogue between Socrates and Aspasia. "Socrates, I have read in your heart," she says to him; "it is burning for the son of Dinomace and of Clinias. Listen to me, if you would that the handsome Alcibiades should pay you back, be docile to the counsels of my tenderness." . . . "Oh ravishing words!" cries Socrates, "oh transports! . . . A cold sweat runs over my body; my eyes are filled with tears." . . . "Cease to sigh," she interrupts him, "fill yourself with a sacred enthusiasm; elevate your mind to the divine heights of poetry; and that enchanting art shall open to you the gates of the soul. Gentle poetry is the charm of the intelligence; the ear is a road to the heart, and the heart is a road to everything else." Socrates, becoming more and more tender, can only weep and hide his bald head between his hands: "Why do you weep, my dear Socrates? Will your heart always be troubled by the love which the eyes of that insensible young man dart forth like lightning? I promise to bend him for you!" . . . The complacent Aspasia did not appear to be too much piqued by the successor whom Socrates wished to give her, she who had had the first fruits of that austere wisdom. "Venus took vengeance on him," says the elegiac poet Hermesianax, "by inflaming him for Aspasia; his profound mind was never more occupied than with the frivolous worries of love. He was always inventing new pretexts for going back to Aspasia, and he, who had unveiled the truth in the most tortuous sophism, was unable to find any way out of the labyrinth of his own heart."

Aspasia never manifested better her power over the mind of Pericles than when she led him to declare war on the Samians, then on the Megarians. In these two wars, she accompanied her husband and never left his house of *hetairai*. The war of Samos was for her but an interesting memory of her native city; Aspasia did not want the Samians, who were then at war with the Milesians, to obtain possession of Miletus; she promised aid to her

compatriots and she kept her word with them. As to the war with Megara, the cause here was less honorable. Alcibiades, having heard of the charms of Simoethe, the courtezan of Megara, repaired to that city with a few young libertines and carried off Simoethe, stating that they were acting in behalf of Pericles. The Megarians indulged in reprisals and caused two hetairai to be carried off from the house of Aspasia. The latter wept bitterly and war was declared. This war with Megara was the beginning of the Peloponnesian war. Aspasia, by her own amiable presence and that of her daughters, kept up the courage of the captains of the army; during the siege of Samos, especially, the hetairai were indefatigable and they received such enormous benefits that they thanked Venus by erecting to her a temple at the gates of this city which had not been able to resist for long the army of Pericles. This double war, which, however glorious it was, cost much blood and silver, augmented the number of Aspasia's enemies and increased their bitterness. The respectable women, irritated at the preference shown to courtezans over them, were lively in their reproaches to Aspasia and her companions, for having debauched the men and done a wrong to legitimate love. Aspasia meets the wife of Xenophon, who cries more shrilly than the others; she lays hold of her arm and says to her smilingly: "If your neighbor's gold were better than your own, which would you love better, your own or his?" . . . "His," replied that fiery piece of virtue, blushingly. . . . "If his habits and jewels were richer than yours," continued Aspasia, "would you love better his or your own?" . . . "His," she replied unhesitatingly. . . . "But if her husband were better than yours, would you not love him better also?" The wife of Xenophon did not reply, but wrapped herself in the folds of her veil.

Nevertheless, the enemies of Aspasia redoubled in malice and perfidy. The comic poets, paid or seduced, insulted her in the open theater; they called her a new Omphale, a new Dejanira, to express the wrong which she had done to Pericles. Cratinus went so far as to treat her as an immodest and shameless concu-

bine. It was then that Hermippus, one of these makers of comedy, accused her of atheism before the Areopagus, adding, says the Plutarch of Amyot, "that she served as a procuress to Pericles, receiving into her house the middle-class women of the city, with whom Pericles took his pleasure." The accusation took its course; Aspasia appeared before the Areopagus and she would inevitably have been condemned to death if Pericles had not come in person to defend her; he took her in his arms and covered her with kisses, being able to find no words beyond his tears, but these tears proved to be a piece of eloquence which saved the accused. The same accusation involved his friends, the philosopher, Anaxagoras, and the sculptor, Phidias; but Pericles, despite the tears of Aspasia, was not able to save them from the exile which threatened. In losing the great man who had saved her, Aspasia did not remain faithful to his memory; she gave him as successor a gross grain merchant named Lysicles, whom she took the pains to polish up and perfume. She did not cease to profess rhetoric, philosophy and hetairism. She died towards the end of the fifth century before Christ. There was a belief on the part of the Pythagorians that her soul had been that of Pythagoras, and that it passed from her beautiful body into that of the ugly cynic Crates. Her name was known to the depths of Asia, and the mistress of Cyrus the younger, governor of Asia Minor, desired to be named Aspasia also, in memory of the celebrated philosoph whom she endeavored to imitate. This second Aspasia, not less remarkable for her beauty and her mind, fell heir to the celebrity which went with her name and entered, by turn, the bed of two Kings of Persia, Artixerxes and Darius. She was a Phocian, and before taking the surname Aspasia, she had borne that of *Milto*, that is to say, vermillion, given her because of her brilliant coloring.

Since Aspasia, by the grace of metempsychosis, had consented to become the cynical Crates, we are not so astonished at the preference which the philosoph Hipparchia accorded this cynic, who lived 350 years before Christ. She belonged to a good family of

Athens; she was not ugly; she possessed much intelligence and education; but when she heard Crates discussing the mysteries of the cynic philosophy, she became amorous of him and she did not fear to declare to her parents her intention of giving herself to Crates. They locked her up, but all she did was sigh for Crates. Her family went to the philosopher and besought him to bestir himself in curing her of her stubbornness, and he set about it in quite good faith. When he saw that his reasoning and his advice made not the least impression upon Hipparchia, he laid before her his poverty, he showed her his hunched back, he threw to the ground his staff, his wallet and his cloak: "There," he said to her, "is the man you are going to have and the worldly goods which you shall find with him. Think it over well; you cannot become my wife without leading the life which our sect prescribes." Hipparchia replied that she was ready for everything and that she had made her reflections. Crates made his also on the spot, and in the presence of the crowd which had assembled, he celebrated his marriage in the Poecile. From that day on, Hipparchia attached herself to Crates, going everywhere with him, accompanying him even to the feasts, against the custom of married women, and making no scruple, according to the expression of Bayle, "of rendering him her conjugal duties in the middle of the street." For this was in accordance with the prescriptions of the cynic philosophy. St. Augustine, in his *City of God*, throws a doubt on this indecent circumstance by saying (and we shall make use here of the translation of the venerable Lamothe Levayer, the preceptor of Monsieur, the brother of Louis XIII), "It is not to be believed that Diogenes nor those of his household, who have the reputation of doing everything in public, take a true pleasure in so doing, imitating as they do, under the cloak of a cynic, the commotions of those who copulate, in order to impose thus on the eyes of the spectators." However this may be, the marriage of Crates and Hipparchia was immortalized by the *cynogamies* which the cynics of Athens celebrated in the same manner under the portico of the Poecile. Hipparchia was even

more cynical than her Crates, and nothing could make her blush. One day, at a meal, she posed a sophism which the atheist, Theodorus, resolved by lifting up her petticoat, according to the rather hazardous expressions of which Ménage makes use in translating Diogenes Laertius (*an esure d'autes Moimation*). Hipparchia did not budge, but let him do it. "What does that prove?" she said to him, seeing him stop quite short. It did not appear that the philosophy of Diogenes had much prestige among the courtesans, for, as a Greek poet enigmatically puts it, "It did not make the price of perfumes drop." Hipparchia had, however, a number of pupils who followed her villainous example, and who would have made even the dicteriades blush. She composed a number of works of philosophy and of poetry, among others, letters, tragedies and a treatise on the hypotheses, which caused a certain hetaira to remark: "Everything with her is an hypothesis, even love." There is, in Greek, a very free word play which explains the etymology of *hypothesis* (*hypo*, under, and *thesis*, position.) Hipparchia, as a courtezan, could possess no vogue except in the world of cynics, for the portrait which the philosoph Aristippus has left of the disciples of Diogenes gives a picture that is unattractive enough of the women of this sect: "Are you not right," she says, "to mock yourselves of those men who draw their vanity from the thickness of their beards, from their gnarled staffs and their cloaks in tatters, under which they conceal the most outrageous dirt and all the vermin that can lodge there? What would you say, moreover, of their nails, which resemble the claws of a wild beast?"

The Pythagoreans, at least, despite the precepts of Socrates, were better clad and better washed; the hetairai who devoted themselves to these philosophers, and who lent them a devoted aid, had nothing repulsive in their toilet and, beyond the cares of philosophy, they took the time to think of material things. These hetairai did not turn up their nose at luxury, especially those of the sect of Epicurus. Before the latter, Stilpon, a philosopher of Megara, who lived in the middle of the fourth century before

Christ, had introduced *hetairai* also into the sect of the Stoics, although this sect regarded virtue as the first good. Stilpon began by being a debauchee, and he always kept something of this character, even while he was recommending to his disciples the bridling of their passions; the basis of his doctrine was apathy and immobility. His mistress, Nicarete, who must be distinguished from a courtezan of the same name, the mother of the famous Neera, protested against this doctrine and divided her time between mathematics and love. Born of honorable parents who had given her a fine education, she was passionately interested in the problems of geometry, and she would not refuse her favors to anyone who offered her an algebraic solution. Stilpon taught her only dialectic; she learned from others those great properties which are the object of mathematical studies; Stilpon was often in a drunken slumber; the others were only too wide awake. A philosophic sect with *hetairai* for its partisans never failed to succeed. If the mathematician, Nicarete, rendered numerous services to the stoics, Philenis and Leontium were not less useful to the Epicureans. Philenis, disciple and mistress of Epicurus, wrote a treatise on the crooked atoms. She was of Leucadia, but she never took the fatal leap, for she did not have to complain of the coldness of her lovers. She had at her disposition the youth of Epicurus, whereas Leontium did not make the acquaintance of this philosopher until he was in his old age; he then loved her all the more, but she was often quite embarrassed at giving him love for love. "I triumph, my dear queen," he wrote her in response to one of her letters, "in that pleasure which I feel upon reading your epistle!" Diogenes Laertius has, unfortunately, cited only this epistolary beginning. As to the letters of Leontium, we have but a single one, addressed to her friend Lamia; but we may judge from this letter that the old Epicurus had more than one preferred rival. His suspicions and his jealousy were, then, but too well justified. Leontium admired the philosopher and abhorred the old man.

"I call to witness Venus!" she wrote to Lamia. "If Adonis

himself could come back to earth, and if he were eighty years old, if he were crushed with the infirmities of age, eaten up by vermin, covered with a stinking and ugly fleece like my Epicurus, Adonis himself would be insupportable to me.” Epicurus is jealous, and with reason, of one of his disciples, of Timarcus, the young and handsome Cephisian, whom Leontium justly prefers to him. “It is Timarcus,” she says, “who first initiated me into the mysteries of love; he dwelt in my neighborhood, and I believe it was he who had the first fruits of my favor. Since that time, he has not ceased to load me with gifts: robes, silver, servants, slaves, jewels from foreign lands; he has been prodigal with me in everything.” Epicurus is not less generous, but he is not any more amicable and he is a hundred times more jealous; for if Timarcus suffers without complaining the rivalry of his master, the latter cannot forgive him for being young, handsome and loved. Epicurus, then, charges his favorite disciples, Hermacus, Metrodorus and Polienos, to keep a watch on the two lovers and to prevent them from coming together. “What are you trying to do, Epicurus?” says Leontium, who endeavors to appease him. “You betray yourself to ridicule; your jealousy will become the subject of public conversation and of jokes in the theatres; the sophists will write glosses on you.” But the gray-beard will hear nothing of this; he demands that none but he be loved: “The whole city of Athens, if it were peopled with Epicurus or with men like him,” cries Leontinum, driven to her wits’ end, “would not, I swear by Diana, be as much esteemed by me as the least part of Tirmarcus’ body, even the end of his finger!” Leontium demands asylum of Lamia in order to find shelter against the furies and the tender transports of Epicurus.

She did not deny herself distractions in the meanwhile; she had, at the same time, another lover, the poet Hermesianax of Colophon, who composed in her honor a history of amorous poets, and who reserved for her the finest place in his book. But she was more preoccupied with philosophy than with poetry, and she was never more at home than in the delicious gardens of Epi-

curus, where she prostituted herself publicly with all the disciples of the master, according her favors in the sight of all the world. It is Athenaeus who furnishes us with these philosophic details. It is uncertain, after this, as to just how the painter, Theodorus, had represented Leontium in meditation: *Leontium Epicuri cogitantem*, says Pliny, who praises this celebrated portrait. She did not limit herself to speaking on the doctrine of Epicurus; she wrote other works remarkable for the elegance of their style. The one which she published against the savant Theophrastus was the admiration of Cicero, who regretted finding so much good Atticism springing from a source so impure. It was rumored that the Epicurean doctrine had made her a mother, and that her daughter, Danae, whom she attributed to Epicurus, was born under the plane-trees of that philosopher's garden. Otherwise, despite his venerable age, Epicurus concealed under his white hairs all the ardors of a young heart. Diogenes Laertius cites this letter of his, comparable to the burning ode of Sappho: "I am consuming myself; scarcely can I resist the fire which devours me; I await the moment at which you shall come to join me in a felicity worthy of the gods!" Unfortunately, this passionate epistle is not addressed to Leontium, but to Pitocles, one of the disciples of the father of Epicureanism. Notwithstanding Pitocles and Leontium, there has been an effort to make out Epicurus to have been the most chaste and virtuous of philosophers. Leontium undoubtedly survived him and was still flourishing towards the middle of the third century before the modern era.

Her daughter, Danae, did not die a courtezan; she had become the concubine of Sophron, the governor of Ephesus, without abandoning, on this account, the philosophy of her mother and father. Sophron loved her to distraction, and Laodicea, the wife of Sophron, was not jealous of her; on the contrary, she became her friend and confidant; she confided to her one day that she had employed assassins to free them both, at one and the same time, of a husband and a lover. Danae went to reveal this

to Sophron, who barely had time to flee to Corinth. Laodicea, furious at seeing her victim escape her, revenged herself on Danae and ordered her to be hurled from the top of a rock. Danae, surveying the height from which she was to be flung, cried out: "Oh ye gods! It is with reason that men deny your existence. I am dying miserably for having wished to save the life of the man I love, and Laodicea, who wished to assassinate her husband, will go on living in the bosom of glory and of honor."

Such were the principal philosophs among the Greek hetairai, who gave a prestige to science, and who lent to Prostitution an intellectual attraction, giving, so to speak, a *raison d'etre* to its gestures; they elevated themselves to the rank of masters of philosophy, by their words and by their style; their glory was reflected over the innumerable family of courtezans who, in frequenting the poets and philosophers, did not all, by any means, become philosophers and poets themselves. Plato had Archanasse of Colophon; Meneclides had Bacchis of Samos; Sophocles had Archippe; Antagoras had Bedion, etc.; but the hetairai, for the most part, were content to shine in their own profession and did not seek to appropriate the genius of their lovers, as Prometheus had appropriated the sacred fire. Poets and philosophers vied with one another in singing the praises of these courtezans.



## CHAPTER XII.

**A**LMOST all the great men of Greece attached themselves, like Pericles, to the chariots of courtesans; each orator, each poet had his intimate; but while the hetairai who gave themselves thus to letters and to eloquence had for motive nothing but the love of celebrity, they were frequently deceived in their expectations, and their lovers failed to celebrate them except in more ephemeral works, or works, at least, which have not come down to us. There remained, therefore, very few details regarding the hetairai whom the illustrious names of their adorers would sufficiently commend to us, but who, perhaps, neglected to commend themselves by their own graces and their minds. It seems that the eminent men who did not blush to love them and to recline publicly at their feet were afraid of compromising themselves with posterity by making themselves the trumpets of Prostitution and of the vices which flow from it. It is possible, also, that the mistresses chosen by the masters of Greek literature had no other merit than the honor which this choice and their own material beauty conferred upon them; things are different today, when men of mind prefer beautiful statues and are less preoccupied with sentiments than with sensations; among the Greeks, as we have already said, the woman was remarkable above all for perfection of form, and her harmonious body alone possessed more silent seductiveness than mind and heart would have been able to put into her voice and conversation. And so we are forced to conclude that these sweethearts of the poets, the orators, and the wise men, were nothing more than beautiful and voluptuous.

Plato, nevertheless, turns aside from philosophy to compose verses on the wrinkles of his Archeanasse, whom he loves none the less, however wrinkled she may be. This epigram, which is

untranslatable in French, turns upon the consonantal analogy presented in Greek by the word *wrinkle* and the word *pyre* (in Latin, *rogum* and *ruga*): “Archeanasse, the Colophonian hetairai, is now with me, she who hides under her wrinkles a conquering Love. Ah! unfortunate one, scorched by her flame in its first youth, you are long since the prey of the pyre!” To the poet Asclepiades are commonly attributed these verses, which bear the name of Plato, and which Fontenelle has disguised in a sort of gallant imitation, in which he is careful not to approach the original Greek:

L’aimable Archéanasse a mérité ma foi;  
 Elle a des rides, mais je vois  
 Une troupe d’amours se jouer dans ses rides.  
 Vous qui pûtes la voir avant que ses appas  
 Eussent du cours des ans recu ces petits vides,  
 Ah! que ne souffrîtes-vous pas!\*

However, the epigram of Plato, or of Asclepiades, might be understood in ten ways and translated in a hundred. We shall have less difficulty in understanding another epigram, the author of which is not named, and which was made for another courtezan of Miletus, called Plango, in Greece, and Pamphile in Ionia. This Plango, whose beauty was without rival, took away the lovers of her two friends, Philenis and Bacchis; then, satisfied with her double victory, she offers to Venus a whip and a bridle, with this allegoric inscription: “Plango has dedicated this whip and these brilliant reins and has placed them at the door of her academy, where one learns so well to mount horseback, after having

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\*The French may be rendered:

For Archeanasse has deserved my faith:  
 Her wrinkles are the wraith  
 Of an amorous army: I can see Loves play  
 In every wrinkled trench; if only you  
 Could see her as she was another day,  
 You’d see that this is true!

vanquished with a single courser the warrior maid Phlenis, although she was already on the homeward lap. Amiable Venus, accord to her the favors of seeing her victory becoming immortal." The poet, in these verses, compares the amorous race to the stadia where the chariot races took place; Plango makes such a clever use of whip and bridle that she reaches the goal before Phlenis, who had passed, however, the fatal turn, and who thought she was sure of winning; as to the courser whom Plango mounted in this memorable contest, it was perhaps the poet himself. If Plango won the prize in this race, she was less happy a little later; Lucian tells us that she found herself, one fine morning, robbed of her lover, who, from a horse, had become a squire and had turned the whip and bridle on his feminine rider: "A single cavalier has cost her her life," says Lucian, making allusion to the inscription on the offering to Venus. We may readily suppose that to this offering was joined a statuette representing the courtezan with the features of the goddess whom she invoked in her equestrian academy; for her name (*Plangon*) remained attached to the dolls or wax images which were sold at the gates of the temples of Venus, chiefly at Trezene, where Venus was adored under the title of *Hippolytia*.

Plango was less celebrated for her equestrian manners than for her rivalry with Bacchis. This beautiful hetaira of Samos, gentlest and most decent of courtezans, had for lover Procles of Colophon. This young man meets Plango and forgets Bacchis; but Plango, knowing who was her rival, did not wish to listen at first to the tender supplications of Procles, who offered to sacrifice everything for her, even Bacchis. "You demand of me a proof of love?" he says, "I will give it to you, even though it cost me my life." . . . "Well, then! I demand the necklace of Bacchis," replies Plango, laughingly. This necklace of pearls had no equal in the world; the queens of Asia had sent it to the courtezan, who wore it day and night. Procles, desperate, went away to find Bacchis and, weeping, confessed to the latter that he was dying of love and that Plango, undoubtedly out of derision,

had left him no hope, at least not unless she had the necklace of Bacchis in exchange for what he demanded. Bacchis, in silence, undid her necklace and placed it in Procles' hand; the latter, undecided and beside himself, for a moment was on the point of casting himself at the knees of his noble mistress, but passion bore him away; he rose, trembling, and fled like a thief with the necklace: "I send you back your necklace," writes Plango to Bacchis, in admiration of the latter's generosity, "and tomorrow I shall send you back your lover." The two courtezans conceived much esteem for each other and became bound in so close a friendship that they shared in common the lover and the necklace. When Procles was seen between his two mistresses, it was said: "There is the necklace of the two friends!"

Let us come back to the mistresses of great men. Sophocles, the old man, had two of them, Archippe and Theoris. The latter was a priestess of the mysteries of Venus and Neptune; she was looked upon, also, as a witch, because she made philtres. She had repulsed the love of the famous Demosthenes in order to flatter the pride of Sophocles, who addressed this hymn to Venus: "O goddess, hear my prayer! Render Theoris insensible to the caresses of youth, which you favor; shed your charms over my white hair; and cause Theoris to prefer an old man. The forces of an old man are exhausted, but his mind still conceives desires." Demosthenes, to avenge himself for the disdain of this beautiful priestess, accused her of having incited slaves to deceive their masters and caused her to be condemned to death. Sophocles does not appear to have taken up the defense of the unfortunate Theoris. Perhaps he was already in love with Archippe, who sacrificed for him the young Smicrines: "She is a screech owl," said Smicrines, "she delights in tombs." This tomb hid a treasure; Sophocles, who died at the age of a hundred, left, by will, all his property to the amiable screech owl. The courtezans held no less sway over comedy than over tragedy. Aristophanes was the rival of Socrates and entertained an unfortunate passion for the mistress of that philosopher, whom he had

nicknamed *Theodote*, that is to say, *Gift of God*. This divine hetaira had received lessons from Socrates, who called himself the *wise counsellor in love*; she was taken with that flat nose and bald head of his; she had besought Socrates to give her the humblest place among his lovers and disciples: "Give me then a philtre which I may make use of," she had said to him, sighing, "in order to draw you to me." . . . "But I truly do not wish," Socrates had replied, "to be drawn to you; I much prefer that you come to seek me." . . . "I shall come willingly, if you will consent to receive me." . . . "I will receive you, if there is no one near me whom I love more than you." She chose her time well and came when Socrates was alone. Socrates continued to give her excellent advice on the regulation of her conduct as a courtesan and for keeping her lovers a long time by rendering them always more passionate. In the meantime, she made an enemy of Aristophanes, when she refused to take him for one of her lovers. The terrible poet suspected Socrates of having warned the naive Theodote against him, and in place of revenging himself on her, he composed the comedy of the *Clouds*, in which he truly attacks the philosopher. This comedy had for denouement the trial which caused Socrates to be condemned to drink the hemlock. Theodote wept for Aristophanes' glorious victim: "Your friends are your riches," Socrates had said to her, on the first visit which she had paid to him; "they are the most precious and the rarest of all your riches!" Theodote was never willing to admit to her friendship the enemy, the accuser, the hangman of Socrates.

The poet Menander, whose comedies were not satires like those of Aristophanes, was better received by the courtesans. Lamia and Glycera disputed, successively, the glory of possessing and holding him; the one, mistress of Demetrius Poliorcetes, the other of Harpalus of Pergamus. Compendious dissertations have been written with the object of ascertaining whether he surpassed the two princes in the good graces of their favorites. "Menander is of the most amorous temperament," wrote Glycera to Bacchis, whom she feared to have for a rival, "and the most austere man

would scarcely be able to defend himself against the charms of Bacchis. Do not tax me then with forming unjust suspicions and pardon me, my dear, the worries of love. I regard as a thing most important to my happiness the keeping of Menander as a lover, for if I come to break with him, if his tenderness merely should grow cold toward me, should I not be in constant fear of being betrayed upon the stage and becoming a butt for the insulting remarks of Chremes and of Dyphilus?" Glycera truly loved Menander, and the latter was so taken with her that, in order not to leave her, he refused the brilliant offers of the King of Egypt, Ptolmeny, who sought in vain to attach the playwright to his person. "Far from you," wrote Menander to Glycera, "what pleasures should I find in life? Is there anything in the world that can flatter me more or make me happier than your friendship? Your charming character, the gayety of your spirit, prolong even into old age the delights of youth. Let us pass together the days that remain to us; let us grow old together, let us die together; let us not take with us when we die the regret which comes from the fancy that the one who survives could still enjoy any happiness. May the gods keep me from hoping for happiness of this sort!" Menander preferred the love of Glycera to all the joys of ambition, to all the splendors of fortune; and so he sent to Ptolemy in his place the poet Philemon: "Philemon has no Glycera!" he writes, with tenderness. Glycera, touched by this proof of real affection, strives, nevertheless, to prevail upon Menander to accept the proposition of the King of Egypt; she did not wish to be any less generous than he, she followed him everywhere, she went to set up house with him in Alexandria, but she triumphed in her heart and rejoiced at having won the day over Ptolemy: "I do not fear any more," she says, "the slight duration of a love which is based only on passion: if attachments of this sort are violent, they are also easily broken; but when they are sustained by mutual trust, it seems that one may look upon them as indissoluble." It is scarcely believable that it is a courtezan who is experiencing these delicate shades of feeling, and it

is to be concluded that love was none the less lasting with an old courtezan than with a young vestal. Before loving Menander, Glycera had been royally supported by Harpalus, one of the rich officers of Alexander the Great; but in revenge, Lamia had quitted Menander to enter the royal bed of Demetrius Poliorcetes.

Menander had made a comedy in honor of his Glycera; the poet Eunicus celebrated his own Anthea, in a piece to which he gave her name. Perecrates offered to Corianmno a comedy named after her. Thalatta had also the glory of being put into a comedy, but the name of her poet has been more quickly forgotten than that of his work. The poet Antagoras, the favorite of Antigonus, had no cause to repent having dedicated his muse to his mistress, the avid Bedion, who, adopting the expression of Simonides, began as a siren and ended as a pirate. The orators were still more ardent than the poets over the hetairai, who got from them ordinarily no profit beyond the satisfaction of their vanity. Lagide, or the *Dark One*, to whom the rhetorician Cephales had composed a panegyric in gallant style, gave herself, in return for an harangue, to Lysias; Choride made a father of Aristophon, who was himself the son of the courtezan, Chloris. Phyla was the concubine of Hyperides, who had purchased her, and who gave to her the care of a house which he had at Eleusis, without ceasing to carry on relations with Myrrhine, Aristagore, Bacchis and even Phryne; yet Phyla was but a slave girl, born at Thebes. Myrrhine accorded her favors to Euthias to decide him to become the accuser of Phryne, whom she detested: "By Venus!" Bacchis, indignant at this odious traffic, wrote to her, "may you never find another lover! May the sublime object of your love, may that infamous Euthias chain your life to his own!" The rhetoricians and moralists had no less of a penchant for hetairism. Isocrates relents from his austerity in favor of Lagiscium; Herpyllis, who had shown herself worthy, upon the testimony of Aristotle, of being a mother, had given him a son named Nicomacus; Nicerate, the slave of Cassius of Ellis, owed her liberty to the rhetorician, Stephanus. When an hetaira had the

habit of taking a rhetorician or a poet for one of her friends, it became a post which was never left vacant in her house, and, according to the bon mot of one of these amorous and witty ladies, if the fort was badly manned or badly defended, one doubled or tripled the garrison. The celebrated Neera, whom Demosthenes accused of impiety and adultery, before the tribunal of Thesmophores, had for lovers, at one and the same time, Xeneclides, the actor Hipparchus, and the young Phrynon, nephew of the poet, Demochares, who, as an uncle, had enjoyed the same privileges. But this was not all; Phrynon had a friend named Stephanus; they made a bargain to share the nights of Neera, who was not the sort to be frightened by such an arrangement as this, she who, supping with her twin lovers in the house of Chabrias, left their arms to prostitute herself with all the slaves in the house. It must be said, in her excuse, that this night she was drunken. Nais, or Oia, nicknamed *Anticyre*, because she was accused of making her lovers drink the hellebore, also had a number at the same time, disguising them under different names; Archias was her master, Himeneus her go-between, Nicostratus her doctor, Philonides her friend.

One of the most renowned among the *hetairai* of the poets or orators was, certainly, Bacchis, the mistress of the orator, Hyperides. She loved him so profoundly that she refused to know any other man after having made his acquaintance. She was a tender and melancholy soul, content with loving and being loved by one alone. She possessed neither jealousy with regard to her companions nor defiance with regard to their rights; incapable of committing evil or even of conceiving the idea of it, she did not suspect wickedness at the hands of others. When Phryne was accused of impiety by Euthias, Bacchis besought Hyperides to defend her friend and did all she could to save her. The only reproach made against her by the *hetairai* was that of spoiling the trade of courtesan and possessing too much virtue.

When she died, in the prime of life, there was general regret. She was wept as a model of kindness, of gentleness and tender

passion. "Never shall I forget Bacchis," wrote Hyperides after having lost her, "never! How noble and generous was her devotion! It ennobled the name of courtezan. We all should join together to erect a statue to her in the temple of Venus or the Graces! It would be to their glory, for on all sides it is repeated that they are perfidious sirens, devouring monsters, mastered by a passion for gold and measuring their love in accordance with fortune, precipitating their adorers, in the end, into an abyss of misery." Bacchis had rejected the most magnificent gifts in order to remain faithful to Hyperides; she died poor, possessing nothing but the cloak of her lover as the covering for the miserable bed where she still sought the trace of his kisses.

"I shall not surprise any more her gentle looks," exclaimed the desolated lover between his sighs, "I shall not see again the voluptuous smile of that charming mouth; gone are the delights of those nights which she animated with a pleasure that was always renewed! Her character, of an ineffable gentleness, was still at home on the breast of the most complete abandonment. What glances! What words! What siren's talk! What pure and intoxicating nectar in her kiss! Seduction reposed upon her lips! She united in herself alone the three Graces and Venus; she seems wrapped in the goddess' own cincture!" And yet, Hyperides had given Bacchis more than one rival; he had even abandoned her, for a moment, to attach himself to Phryne, whose life he had just saved; but Bacchis showed neither spite nor rancour; she remained none the less faithful to him; and if one asked her what she was doing alone while Hyperides was forgetting her in the arms of a horde of worthless mistresses, "I am waiting!" she would say with simplicity. The adventure of the necklace had given her a vogue throughout all Greece, and she was never called anything but the *good* Bacchis. As to Plango, who, on the other hand, had not played an odious role in this adventure, she was pardoned for having disturbed the amours of Bacchis and was nicknamed Pasiphile, or the *Peacock*. The morcant Archiolochus compares her, in his verses, to the fig trees

which grow on rocks and in isolated places and whose bitter fruits serve only to nourish crows and birds of passage: "Thus," he says, "the favors of Pasiphile are only for strangers who pass and come no more." There was, it may be seen, a certain moral justice among the courtezans, who were subject to public opinion.

Bacchis was not the only one who won esteem in her profession. Aristaemetes and Lucian also cite Pithias, who, although an hetaira, preserved decent manners and, as they said, "never departed from beautiful and simple nature." Another, Theodete, who undoubtedly would not have deserved the same praise, afforded, still, an example of the most devoted tenderness; she had loved Alcibiades, when her own lover had perished in the ambuscades of Pharnabazus; she received his remains piously, wrapped them in rich stuffs and paid them funereal honors. One sees, thus, a courtezan going into mourning for the pupil of Socrates. Alciabides was not, however, a faithful lover, and it might be said that he looked upon it as a point of honor to be acquainted with all the courtezans of his time. One day, someone spoke, in front of him and his pet, Axiochus, of Medontis of Abydos, whom he did not know; they praised her in turns which excited his curiosity; he embarked that same evening with Axiochus, traversed the Hellespont, and went to pass the night between her and the lad. Many hetairai were celebrated who have left us nothing more than their names; such were the four courtezans Scyonne, Lamia, Satyra and Nanion, who appeared in a chariot beside Themistocles, or who attached themselves, in accordance with another tradition, to the chariot in which this illustrious son of a dicteriade was couched in a costume of Hercules. They were afterwards called the *quadrigae* of Themistocles. Lucian, Athenaeus and Plutarch name only Aeris, Agallis, Timandra, Thaumarion, Dexitheia, Malthacea, and a few other celebrities of the same sort. As for Themistonoe, who practised her trade for more than a dozen lustra, she did not quit the amorous arena until she had lost her last tooth and her last lock of hair. This intrepid perseverance was recompensed by the fol-

lowing epigram in the *Anthology*: “Unhappy one, you may efface the color of your white locks, you will not efface the irreparable outrages of old age. In vain, you pour perfumes over you, you exhaust in vain the ceruse and the rouge; but the mask does not hide you. That is a miracle inaccessible to your art, to change Hecuba into Helen.”

The majority of the hetairai possessed, in default of mind and education, a vivacity of repartee, being masters often of happy words and more often of mordant ones. Nico, called the *Nanny-Goat*, on account of her furies, was known for her whims, which she called hoof-blows. One day, Demophon, the boy of Sophocles, demanded permission to assure himself that she was built like Venus Callipyge: “What do you care?” she said to him, disdainfully. “You want to give it to Sophocles?” But the most famous for her epigrams was Mania, who let fly so many sharp and stinging ones that she was called the *Bee*. The Greeks remarked, in allusion to her name, Mania: “She is a gentle folly!” Machon filled an entire book with her witty sayings; she was, moreover, very beautiful and compared herself to one of the three Graces, adding that she had at her house something with which to make a fourth. She replied to a debauchee, who was bargaining for her favors: “I will open to you only my arms; for I know you; you would devour my capital.” A coward, who had taken to flight in a combat, leaving his shield behind him, found himself opposite her at table: “What is the animal that runs the fastest?” he asked of her while carving a rabbit. . . . “A fugitive,” she replied. Then she went on to tell, without mentioning the name, how one of the guests present at the table had lost his buckler in the war; the one who knew himself to be the butt of these railleries blushed, rose and was about to leave: “That was said without any intention of wounding you,” she added, laying a detaining hand on his arm. “I swear to Venus! If anyone has lost his buckler, it must be the foolish one who loaned it to you.” On one occasion, Demetrius Poliorcetes demanded of her permission to judge with his own eyes of those

beauties which she held from Venus Callipyge, and which she might have shown to the shepherd Paris if she had been permitted to enter the contest with the three goddesses; she turned to him on the spot, with an enchanting grace, and proceeded to parody the two verses of Sophocles: "Look, superb son of Agamemnon, on those objects for which you have always had so great an admiration!" She had two lovers at the same time, Leontius and Antenor, whom she had chosen from among the victors at the Olympic games, and whom she satisfied on one and the same night, without one having knowledge of the other. Leontius reproached her with a piqued air when he learned of the thing: "I had a curiosity," she said to him, "to know what sort of wound two athletes, two Olympic victors, would be able to give me in a single night!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

**A**MONG all the Greek *hetairai* who possessed their historians and their panegyrists, the most celebrated, for various reasons, were Gnathene, Lais, Phryne, Pythonice and Glycera.

The biography of Gnathene is only composed of bon mots, of fine repartee, and sparkling epigrams, which the poet Machon put into verse and which Athenaeus collected with a complacency which we regret not being able to imitate. The Greek language had certain licenses which lent themselves to all the audacities to be found in the language of courtezans, while the French finds itself restrained from reproducing them in a manner which is, at once, decent and intelligible. Gnathene, who must have been an Athenian, to judge by the Atticism and the vivacity of her mind, lived in the time of Sophocles, at the end of the fifth century before Christ. She was, certainly, of a remarkable beauty; but the quality that was appreciated most in her was her always inexhaustible gayety, seasoned with remarks which were full of salt, and which, though sometimes gross and bitter, had none the less charm for the libertines. One paid to hear her as to see her, and the dinners which she gave at her own house brought together the most distinguished citizens of Athens. She was, thus, courted and sought after by men of taste long after advancing age had caused the price of her favors to drop, for seeing this abandonment on the part of her lovers, she had reared, under her own eyes, a charming girl, whom she passed off as her niece, and who was called Gnathoenion, or the little Gnathene. This niece showed herself worthy of her aunt and profited well from the lessons which she had received from the latter. These two *hetairai* acquired so much vogue on account of their innumerable repartees that the Samian Lyncaeus, in his *Apothegeums*, makes a curious report of all the qualities of malice and good

humor which were attributed to the aunt or to the niece. Gnathene, who feared being put upon the stage for the laughter of the Athenians, had attached to herself the comic poet Dyphilus; but she did not spare him her bitter pleasantries, and at times it seemed she was trying to show that, at least, she would be able to take his measure in the arena of comedy. Dyphilus, swollen with vanity, wished to have no rivals, and Gnathene, to satisfy him on this point, repeated to him smilingly the Theban proverb: "Brambles never grow in the path of Hercules." She had, nevertheless, as many lovers as she could take, and each of them was received at a different rate. Among the habitues of her house, a certain Syrian, who was not as generous as he might have been, found certain inventions of gallantry which were not very costly but sufficiently diverting, with which he paid Gnathene for her good graces toward him. One day, at the fetes of Venus, this Syrian sent her a vase filled with snow, and a sardine on a plate: "This snow is not as white as you," he wrote, "and this sardine is not so salty as your tongue." Gnathene was about to reply, when there came a messenger from Dyphilus, bringing for the feast that evening two amphoras of the wine of Thrasos, two of the wine of Chios, a venison, fish, perfumes, crowns, ribbons and confections, the whole accompanied by a cook and a flute player: "I wish," she said, "that the presents of my Syrian friend might also figure among the wines and food at supper." And so she ordered that the snow be melted in the wine of Chios, and that the sardine be mixed with the other fish. When supper was served and Dyphilus arrived, the doors were closed; when the Syrian presented himself, he was told to be patient until the table was ready. Gnathene, who knew that her Syrian waited without, was ransacking her head for the means of getting him in and getting rid of Dyphilus. The latter began the libations and, commencing to drink: "By Jupiter!" he cried, "you have cooled my wine in the fountain; there is no other fountain in Athens whose water is so icy-cold." . . . "That may be," she replied, "for we never fail to throw into it the prologues of your dramas." Dy-

philes, wounded by the epigram, did not reply but blushed and retired in silence. Gnathene at once admitted the Syrian and continued the supper with him. She ate, with the finest sort of appetite, the sardine which her preferred guest had given her: "It is a very little fish," she said, "but it gives me a very great pleasure."

Dyphilus was the scape-goat; Gnathene, in order to rid herself of him till the following morning, had but to pique to the quick his poet's pride. One day, at the performance of one of his comedies, he was hissed by the audience and left the theater to the sound of mocking laughter. He was so discouraged and chagrined that he conceived the idea of going to his mistress for consolation. She, however, had disposed of her night; she laughed still more at the set-back which Dyphilus had received, when the latter came to her; Dyphilus called a slave and said to him, brusquely: "Wash my feet." . . . "What is the use?" replied Gnathene, with a disdainful air: "Your feet ought not to be dusty, since the crowd has just done carrying you on its shoulders." Dyphilus did not ask for more, but left, very red and confused. Ordinarily, she kept open table, and whoever wished a seat had but to pay in advance for the menu and to submit to the convivial laws which the courtezan had had put into verse by her Dyphilus, and which were to be read on a marble engraving at the entrance to the festal hall. These laws, in imitation of those which were enforced in the philosophic schools, began thus, according to Callimachus, who cited them in his compendium of jurisprudence: "This law, equal and the same for all, has been written in 323 verses." It may be judged from this beginning that Gnathene affected to show no preference among her lovers, pretending to impose the same conditions upon them all. "She was always elegant," says Athenaeus, filling in the portrait. "She spoke with much grace." Nothing more was needed than her smile, the gleam of her teeth and the flame of her glance to provoke some of her caprices.

Following an orgy which had been held in her house, the guests

beat one another with blows of their fists in disputing for her favors, which she herself had put up at auction. One of the combatants was thrown to the ground and forced to confess himself vanquished: "Console yourself," she said to him, "you may not carry off the crown after the combat, but at least you still have your silver." Her suppers often ended in a battle, and she belonged to the victor. One time, however, the young fellows whom she was entertaining wanted to tear the house down, because Gnathene had refused to extend them credit; they were without money, but they cried out that they had picks and hatchets: "That's a pretty story!" she said, shrugging her shoulders, "if you had any, would you not have pawned them to pay me?" Otherwise, she did not look at any customer too closely, provided he paid well. On one occasion she found herself in bed with a rascal of a slave, who bore upon his back the scars of the whiplashes which his master had given him: "You have some terrible wounds there," she said to him. . . . "Yes," he replied. "It is where I burned myself from spilling soup on my shoulders." . . . "That must be a famous soup made of calf-skin lashes!" she replied. . . . "The soup was warm," he said stammeringly, "and I was but a child." . . . "They did right," she replied, "to whip you as they did to correct your ways." Her companions had reason to fear the barbed darts which she let fly, right and left, but she met, upon occasion, a tongue as biting as her own. She often quarreled with Mania, who yielded her nothing in point of malice. They were so close that they knew each other's defects and mutual infirmities; if Mania was subject to the gravel, Gnathene suffered from incontinence of urine and a chronic dropping of the belly: "Am I then the cause of your having stones?" she says angrily. . . . "If I had them, my poor dear," Mania replied, "I should give them to you to wall you up before and behind." The hetaira Dexitheia invited her to supper, but the dishes had barely appeared upon the table when she had them taken away, ordering them to be conveyed to her mother: "If I had foreseen this," Gnathene told her, "I should

have gone to dine at your mother's house and not at yours." At the same supper they poured her, in a very slender goblet, a sixteen-year-old wine: "How do you find it?" Dexithea asked her. . . . "It seems to me it is very small for its age!" was Gnathene's response. There was a certain unbearable babbler who never ceased talking about the last voyage he had made in the Hellespont: "What!" interrupted Gnathene, "and yet, you haven't visited the first city of that land?" . . . "Which one?" demanded the traveler. . . . "Sigea," she said, "the City of Silence (from *sigein*, to keep silent)." She had at the same time two paying tenants, an Armenian soldier and a Sicilian freedman; one of them said to her, in front of the other: "You are like the sea!" . . . "How do you mean?" she replied. "Is it because I receive two villainous streams, the Lycos of Armenia and the Eleutheros of Sicily?"

It is easily understood that Gnathoenion had little trouble in completing her education in the school of her aunt, who otherwise looked well after her and often aided her with good advice. They went together, at the time of the fetes of Venus, to seek their fortune in the temple of the goddess. When they came out, they were met by an old satrap, so wrinkled and broken that he seemed to be ninety years old. The old man remarked the beauty of Gnathoenion and, going up to Gnathene, he asked what it would cost to spend a night with that pretty child. Gnathene, seeing the stranger's robe of purple and judging his opulence by the number of slaves he had for escort, replied: "A thousand drachmas (1,000 francs)." . . . "What!" cried the satrap, feigning surprise, "just because you see me followed by a great troop of people, you think you have me prisoner and will raise the price of my ransom? I will give you five minae (500 francs); it is a bargain, and I will come back." . . . "At your age," was Gnathene's quick response, "it is a good deal to come once." . . . "My aunt," interrupted Gnathoenion, "do not make a price. You shall give me what you please, papa, but I will wager you will be so well satisfied with me that you will pay

double, and that this night will be worth as much as two.” Gnathoenion had for lover an actor named Andronicus, who often paid her only in fine words; but this actor had won the support of the aunt by recalling her own amours with the comic poet Diphilus. Gnathoenion, however, preferred to Andronicus a rich foreign merchant who loaded her with presents. The actor arrives with empty hands, and Gnathoenion turns her back on him: “Do you see how haughtily your daughter treats me?” he said with a sigh to the old Gnathene. . . . “Foolish little girl,” said the latter to her niece, “embrace him, caress him if he asks it, and forget your moods.” . . . “My mother,” replied Gnathoenion, “must I embrace a man who does so little for our republic, and who yet regards everything we have as his property?” Andronicus had just played with success the principal role in the *Epigones* of Sophocles, but he was no longer rich. On leaving the stage, covered with perspiration and laden with crowns, he summoned a slave and ordered him to announce his dramatic triumph to his mistress, with the request that she stand the expense of the supper which he would share with her that evening. Gnathoenion received the slave and his message with this verse from the tragedy of the *Epigones*: “Unhappy slave, what do you come to say?” And she shut the door in his face and went to join at the Piraeus her merchant who was waiting for her. Her equipage was not fastidious; mounted on a small mule, she had for sole cortege three servants seated on asses and a valet who led the beast. On the way, she met, in a magnificent equipage, one of those wrestlers who never lost an occasion to appear at the public games, and who were always vanquished: “Knave of a groom!” he cried from afar, with the triumphant air of a haughty athlete, “get out of the road, or I will upset the mule, the asses and the women.” . . . “Fine!” replied Gnathoenion, “you will be doing, then, what you have never done before, redoubtable champion!” The old Gnathene, when told of this adventure, made this sensible remark: “What wouldn’t he pay to throw you to the ground?” This good aunt kept a watchful eye over the interests

of her niece, for a certain gallant, after a bargain concluded and faithfully executed on one side and the other, thinking he would get gratuitously from Gnathoenion what he had paid a mina for the night before, met with this severe response from Gnathoenion: "Young man, do you think it is enough with us to have paid once, as you do in the riding academy of Hippomachus?" In her old age, we see the poor Gnathene reduced to carrying on a trade which had won the nickname of *hippopornos* for the women and men who were dishonored by it. Diogenes, seeing a jockey of this sort pass on horseback, splendidly clad and laden with jewels, exclaimed: "I have long sought for the true *hippopornos*; I have met it at last." The word *hippopornos* signified, literally, Prostitution on horseback. Gnathoenion, as she grew older, led a more regular life and reared, not disrespectably, a daughter whom she had had by Andronicus, or whose father Andronicus was reported to be.

Lais did not owe her celebrity to her bon mots, although those attributed to her are not inferior to those of Gnathene and Gnathoenion; it was her beauty, her incomparable beauty, which placed her above all the hetairai, and which made of her almost a Corinthian divinity. She was born at Hiccaria in Sicily; when Nicias, the Athenian general, took this city and sacked it, the young child was brought to the Peloponnesus and sold as a slave. One day the painter Apelles met her, as she was coming back from the fountain with a vase full of water on her head; divining that she was beautiful, he admired her and purchased her. The same day he took her to a feast, where his friends were astonished at seeing him accompanied by a young girl in place of a courtezan. "Do not trouble yourselves about that," he told them, "do not be surprised; I shall train her so well that before three years have passed she will know her trade to perfection." Apelles kept his word, and he was undoubtedly no stranger to the development of the graces and talents of Lais. She went to set up house in Corinth, the city of courtezans, and a dream sent her by Venus Melanis informed her that she was soon to make a

fortune. The dream was realized; the renown of Lais spread over Asia, and from all parts a throng of rich strangers was to be seen coming to Corinth with no other object than to seek Lais' favors; but they did not all achieve the object of their voyage. Lais not only demanded exorbitant sums, but she also demanded the right to choose the hand which gave those sums; sometimes, by caprice, she would accept nothing. Demosthenes, the illustrious orator, also desired to know what Lais was worth; he took with him all the silver he could lay his hands on and went to Corinth. He hunted up the courtezan and demanded the price of one of her nights. "Ten thousand drachmas," Lais replied. "Ten thousand drachmas!" exclaimed Demosthenes, who had not expected to pay more than the tenth part of this sum: "I do not pay so dear for the shame and chagrin of having to repent what I have done!" "It is because I also do not want to repent," said Lais, "that I ask of you ten thousand drachmas." Demosthenes returned as he had come. Lais, however, loved celebrated men; she had also, at the same time, as privileged lovers, the elegant and amiable philosopher, Aristippus, who paid her well, and the gross and dirty cynic, Diogenes, who would have found it hard to pay her at all. She preferred the latter to the former and did not appear to notice the fact that Diogenes smelled bad. As to the rival, he did not appear to be jealous and often, in order to see Lais, he would wait at her door until she would come out, laden with perfumes, on the arm of the cynic. "I possess Lais," he would say to those who expressed astonishment at this arrangement, "but Lais does not possess me." When told that Lais was giving herself to him without love and without attraction, he would reply with the same phlegmatic indifference: "I do not think that wine and fishes love me; yet I eat them with great pleasure." He was reproached for enduring the daily prostitution of Lais, and advised to turn her out of doors. "I am not rich enough," he said, "to buy so precious an object for myself alone." "But," his friends objected, "will you ruin yourself for her?" . . . "I would give much, as a matter of fact," he re-

plied, "to have the happiness of possessing her, but I should not want, for that reason, to see others deprived of her." Diogenes, on the contrary, despite his cynicism, looked with jealousy on the relations between Lais and the brilliant philosopher, Aristippus. "Since you share with me the good graces of my mistress," he said to Aristippus one day, "You ought to share also my philosophy and take up the staff and cloak of the cynics." . . . "Does it appear to you strange, then," Aristippus replied, "to live in a house which has already been inhabited by others, or to board a vessel which has served to carry many passengers?" . . . "No, indeed!" replied the cynic, ashamed of his jealous feelings. . . . "Well, then! Why are you surprised that I see a woman who has seen other men before me and who will see still more after me?" Aristippus went with her every year to attend the fetes of Neptune at Aegina, and during that time, he remarked, the house of the courtezan was as chaste as that of a matron.

This courtezan exercised such a sway over the two philosophers, Aristippus and Diogenes, that she believed there was not a philosopher in the world who could resist her. She was defied to overcome the virtue of Xenocrates, and accepted the wager, thinking a disciple of Plato would not be more difficult to conquer than a disciple of Socrates. One night, half-clad, she wrapped herself in a veil and went to knock on the door of Xenocrates; he opened the door and was astonished to see a woman coming to his house. She told him that she had been pursued by thieves; her arms, her neck, her ears were laden with jewels which shone in the darkness. He thereupon consented to give her asylum till morning, and went back to his own bed, advising her to sleep upon a bench. But he was no sooner in his bed than Lais, showing herself in all the splendor of her beauty, placed herself at the philosopher's side; she approached him, she touched him, she forced herself between his arms, she attempted to animate him by caresses, which, however, left him cold and indifferent; then, she fell to weeping with rage and redoubled her embraces, recoiling from no sort of provocation. Xenocrates did not budge.

Finally, she leaped out of this insulting bed and hid her shame once more under her veil. She had lost the wager, and when the sum which she had lost was demanded of her, she said: "I wagered that I would render a man, not a statue, sensible." Hers was a marvelous beauty; her throat was perfect, and painters as well as sculptors, who wished to represent Venus in a worthy fashion, besought Lais to pose for the goddess. The sculptor Myron was admitted to look upon this adorable courtezan without veils; he was old, he had white hair and a grizzled beard, but he felt young again at the sight of Lais; he leaped to his feet, offering her all he owned to possess her for one night; she smiled, shrugged her shoulders and left. The next day, Myron had had his hair and beard cut off; he was rouged and perfumed; he wore a scarlet robe and a gilded cincture; he had a chain of gold on his throat and rings on all his fingers. He had himself brought into Lais' presence and declared to her, with a haughty toss of the head, that he was in love with her. "My poor friend," replied Lais, who had recognized him and was amused at the metamorphosis, "you are asking me what I refused your father yesterday."

She had to endure a refusal in her turn, when she fell in love with Eubates, whom she met at the Olympic games, where he had come to contend for the prize. He was a handsome and noble young man, who had left at Cyrene a wife whom he loved. Lais had no sooner glimpsed him than she made him a declaration of love, in terms so clear and pressing that Eubates was very embarrassed in replying to her. She besought him to become her guest and take up his abode at her house; he excused himself, saying he had need of all his strength in order to win the victory in the games. She became more and more inflamed each instant and trembled lest the object of her passions should escape her. "Swear to me," she said, "to take me back with you to Cyrene, if you are the victor!" To escape her persecution, he gave her his oath and thus preserved his fidelity to his own well-beloved; otherwise, he would have ended by succumbing to the all-power-

ful gaze of Lais. Eubates was the victor; Lais sent him a golden crown, but she learned shortly afterward that Eubates had returned to Cyrene. "He has broken his oath," she said to a friend of Eubates. "He has kept it," the friend replied, "for he has taken back with him your portrait." The mistress of Eubates was so astonished at such fidelity and continence, when she learned what had passed, that she erected in honor of her lover a statue to Minerva. Lais, to revenge herself, erected another, representing Eubates with the features of Narcissus. This proud hetaira had about her constantly a court of flatterers and enthusiastic adorers; many cities of Greece contended for the glory of having been her birthplace; the most considerable personages felt honored at having had relations with her; and yet, a few foolish moralists would remind her, sometimes, that her trade was a shameful one. This was what a tragic poet did, who alluded to her Prostitution by exclaiming in one of his plays: "Away from me, infamous woman!" Lais caught sight of him as he was leaving the theater and stopped him to demand, in the most caressing voice, what he meant by this cruel apostrophe. "You are, yourself, one of those whom I was addressing!" he told her brutally. . . . "Is that so!" she replied gaily, "but you know that verse of tragedy: 'Only that is shameful which one makes by thinking so.' " This verse was justly taken from a piece by this poet, who did not know what to reply. Athenaeus reports, after Macho, that the poet whose disdain Lais thus punished was Euripides himself, but if this was the case, we should have to assign this anecdote to the early youth of Lais, who was in the service of Apelles when Euripides died, in the year 407 before Christ. However this may be, the reply of Lais became proverbial, and since it was abused to justify many turpitudes, the old philosopher, Antisthenes, thus revised the axiom of the courtezan: "That which is filthy is filthy, whether it appears so or not to those who do it." Lais, in place of combatting this new apothegm, adopted it as Antisthenes had formulated it. "That old man is right," she said to Diogenes, who was the disciple of Antisthenes. "He is as squalid

as he appears." . . . "And I?" replied Diogenes, wounded in his cynic soul. . . . "As for you," she said, "I know nothing, since I love you."

Lais had amassed an immense fortune, but she caused to be constructed temples and public edifices; she had sculptors, painters and cooks on her pay roll, and thus ruined herself. She had, happily, a taste for her trade to such a degree that she did not lament being obliged to continue it at an age when most courtezans retired. She was, moreover, still very beautiful, although the price of her favors had singularly diminished; she consoled herself with drink for this premature degeneration. Epicrates, cited by Athenaeus, has given us a touching picture of Lais' old age, and all she had left was her name. "Lais is idle and drunken. She comes to wander among the tables. To me, she is like one of those birds of prey which, in the strength of youth, hurl themselves from the summit of mountains and carry off young goats, but which, in old age, perch languidly on the pinnacles of temples, where they live consumed by hunger, a sinister augury. Lais, in her springtime, was rich and superb. It was easier to approach the satrap Pharnabazus than her. But now, her winter is coming; the temple is fallen in ruins and opens easily; she stops the first comer to drink with him, a stater, a three-oboles-piece, are a fortune to her. Young and old, she takes all the world; age has so softened her humor that she extends her hand for a few pieces of money." This passage from the comedy entitled the *Anti-Lais* was perhaps but an hyperbole which escaped the rancor of a poet whom the courtezan had ill-received. Aeliani relates, also, that she was not of easy access until her old age had cooled the ardor of her pursuers; they had even nicknamed her *Axine*, on account of her intractable avarice. Athenaeus tells us, however, basing his faith upon a well-established tradition, that there was no difference between the offers of the rich and those of the poor. This detail, probably, was only true at that period of her life when debauchery was the consolation of her misery.

The thing which shows us the oblivion into which she had fallen

at the end of her amorous career is the obscurity which envelopes the time and circumstances of her death. She was then seventy years old, according to some, fifty-five according to others; the latter insisted that she was well-preserved; the former asserted, on the contrary, that she was on the verge of decrepitude. Whatever may have been her age and her visage, the *Anthology* has her dedicating her mirror to Venus with an inscription which Voltaire has imitated in these charming verses:

Je le donne à Vénus, puisqu'elle est toujours belle:  
Il redouble trop mes ennuis!  
Je ne saurais me voir dans ce miroir fidèle  
Ni telle que j'étais ni telle que je suis.\*

As to the nature of her death, one does not know whether to believe Plutarch, Athenaeus, or Ptolemacus. The last affirms that she strangled to death while eating olives; Athenaeus relies on the authority of Philetaerus to show that she died in the exercise of her functions as a courtezan (*ouchi Lais men teleutos apethane binoumene*) and Plutarch reports that, being senile and in love with a young Thessalian named Hippolochus, she followed him into Thessaly and entered a temple of Venus, where he had fled for refuge from the embraces of this Bacchante; but the women of the country, indignant at her audacity, and still jealous of her beauty, which was no more than a memory, surrounded the temple with great cries and stoned her before the altar of Venus, which was stained with the blood of the courtezan. After this murder, the temple was dedicated to Venus the Homicidal and to Venus the Profaned. They erected a tomb for Lais on the banks of the Penea, with this epitaph: "Greece, once invincible and fertile in heroes, has been vanquished and reduced to slavery by the divine beauty of that Lais, daughter of Love, formed in the

\*I give it to Venus, since she is always fair:  
It merely increases my ennui!  
I cannot look into this mirror and compare  
Myself with what I was or seem to be.

school of Corinth, who reposes in the noble fields of Thessaly.” Corinth also dedicated a monument to the memory of its illustrious pupil; this monument represented a lioness felling a ram. It is possible that the facts of Lais’ life do not all belong to those of the same woman, and that two or three hetairai of the same name, who lived at about the same time, had been confounded at once by historians and popular tradition. Thus, the mistress of Alciabides, Damasandra, had a daughter named Lais, and one who was known for her beauty even more than for her gallantries. Pliny notes also another Lais, who was a midwife, and who had invented secret remedies and species of philtres for augmenting or diminishing the embonpoint of women. This Lais gave herself equally to the trade of courtezan, along with her friends, Salpe and Elefantis, courtezans like herself and, like herself, very expert in the art of cosmetics, abortions, and aphrodisiac beverages. They cured also madness and the quartan fever and, in all their drugs, they employed different kinds of menstrual blood, mingled with more or less innocent substances. The city of Corinth was glorified at having been the theater of the fastidious prostitutions of Lais, but no city of Greece boasted of having seen this queen of courtezans when she was old, broken and forgotten, making powders, ointments and elixirs and selling love in a bottle.

Another hetaira, a contemporary of Lais and not less celebrated, was Phryne, who did not have so saddening a decline nor an end so tragic. Despite her immense riches, she never ceased to increase them by the same means, and, since she lost nothing of her magnificent form as she grew older, she still had lovers who paid her heavily, even to the eve of her death. This was what she gaily called “selling dearly the lees of her wine.” She was of Thespia, but she resided constantly at Athens, where she led a very retired existence, showing herself neither in the Ceramicus or at the theater, neither at the stadia nor at the ordinary religious or civil fetes. She never went into the street without being veiled and clad in a flowing tunic like the most austere matron. She did

not go to the public baths and frequented only the ateliers of painters and sculptors; for she loved the arts, and devoted herself to them, so to speak, by posing in the nude for the brush of Apelles and the chisel of Praxiteles. Her beauty was that of a statue of Parian marble; her features and the lines of her face possessed the purity, the harmony and the nobility which the imagination of the poet and the artist give to a divine image; but her complexion, dull and even slightly yellow, had won for her the nickname of Phryne, by analogy with the bush-frog, *phrya*; for her family name was Mnesarete, but she was not known under that name. The pictures and statues which her favorite painter and sculptor made of her excited the admiration of all Greece, which vowed a cult to corporal beauty, a cult depending on that of Venus. Phryne possessed nothing more remarkable than that which she modestly hid from all eyes, even from the glances of her lovers, who only possessed her in semidarkness; but at the mysteries of Eleusis, she appeared as a goddess in the portico of the temple, and, letting fall her garments in the presence of the crowd, astonished and breathless with admiration, she passed in eclipse behind a veil of purple. At the fetes of Neptune and of Venus, she also quitted her vestments on the steps of the temple and, with only her long ebony hair to cover the nudity of her beautiful body, which shone in the sun, she advanced toward the sea in the midst of the people, who parted with respect to let her pass, and who greeted her with a cry of unanimous enthusiasm. Phryne entered the waves to render homage to Neptune, and she came out like Venus at her birth; one saw her for a moment on the sand, shaking off the salty waves which trickled down the length of her plump thighs; one saw her wringing out her dripping hair; and one would have said then that Venus had been born a second time. Following this instant of triumph, Phryne robed herself amid acclamations and took hiding once more in an everyday obscurity. But the effect of this apparition was nothing less than prodigious, and the renown of the courtezan filled all mouths and ears. Each year, more and more curious ones attended the

mysteries of Eleusis and the fetes of Neptune and Venus with no other object than to catch a glimpse of Phryne.

So much glory for a courtezan attracted to her the envy and hatred of virtuous women; the latter, to avenge themselves, made use of the intervention of Euthias, who had futilely besieged Phryne without obtaining from her what she accorded only to money or to genius. This Euthias was an informer of the vilest sort; he accused Phryne before the tribunal of the Heliastes of having profaned the majesty of the Eleusinian mysteries by parodying them, and of being constantly occupied with corrupting the most illustrious citizens of the republic by seducing them from the service of the fatherland. Such an accusation carried with it not merely death for the accused but meant, also, the infliction on all the courtezans, as a body, of a burden of blame, a fine and even exile for some of them. Phryne had had for lover the orator, Hyperides, who was then sharing himself between Myrrhine and Bacchis. Phryne besought these two *hetairai* to bring pressure to bear on Hyperides to defend her against Euthias. The position was a delicate one for Hyperides, who was particularly interested in coming to the aid of Phryne, whom he had loved, and in coping with Euthias, whom he detested as the most cowardly of men. Phryne wept, wrapped in her veils and covering her face with her two ivory hands; Hyperides, much moved and greatly disturbed, stretched out his arms toward her to announce that he would defend her; and when Euthias had formulated his accusations, through the medium of Aristogiton, Hyperides spoke, asserting that he was not a stranger to the cause, since Phryne had been his mistress, and imploring the judges to have pity on the pain he felt. His voice altered, his bosom filled with sighs, his eyes with tears, and still, the tribunal, cold and silent, seemed to be disposed not to relent. Hyperides understood, all too well, the danger which threatened the accused; he burst into maledictions against Euthias, he proclaimed resolutely the innocence of the latter's victim, he recounted with complacency the almost religious role which Phryne alone had been

able to bear in the mysteries of Eleusis . . . The Heliastes interrupted him; they were about to pronounce the fatal sentence; then, Hyperides summoned Phryne and tore off her veils; he snatched away her tunic, invoking, with a sympathetic eloquence, the sacred rites of beauty to save this worthy priestess of Venus. The judges were moved, transported, at sight of so many charms; they believed they were looking on the goddess herself, Phryne was saved, and Hyperides bore her off in his arms; he had fallen more in love than ever at beholding once more that admirable beauty which had had more sway than his own eloquence over the judges; Phryne, for her part, as a recompense, became once more the mistress of her advocate, who turned traitor to Myrrhine. The latter sought to avenge herself by taking the side of Euthias and according to that sycophant all that Phryne had refused him. The courtesans were indignant that one of their number should dare to protest in such a manner against the sentence which had absolved Phryne; and Bacchis served as their interpreter, when she wrote to the imprudent Myrrhine: "You have rendered yourself an object of aversion to all of us who are devoted to the service of Venus Benefactor!"

She was not slow, as a matter of fact, in repenting of having yielded to an impulse of jealousy and vanity. Hyperides, who had quitted her, did not return; he remained for a long time in love with Phryne. "He has a friend worthy of him and of his fine soul," wrote Bacchis to Myrrhine, "and you, you have a lover of the sort you deserve!" Hyperides, by coming forward as the defender of the courtesan, had won for himself more honor and profit than by defending the first citizens of the republic; there was talk of nothing else throughout Greece but of his talent as an orator; the public was tireless in applauding the fine burst of eloquence which had constituted his peroration; presents and tributes of praise poured in on him from all sides, and, as the climax of his blessings, Phryne now belonged to him. If the Greek hetairai did not raise to him a statue of gold, as Bacchis proposed, they spared nothing else in showing their gratitude.

"All the courtezans of Athens in general," wrote Bacchis, speaking for her companions, "and each of them in particular ought to render you as many thanks as Phryne." It may be presumed that his plea was a public one, since that of Aristogiton, who spoke for Euthias, was known at the time of Athenaeus. It is known, also, that Euthias, who had turned calumniator only on account of love, would not rest till Phryne had pardoned him, and that to obtain this pardon, he subscribed to the most ruinous conditions. Bacchis had foreseen this outcome, when she wrote to Phryne: "Euthias is a good deal more in love with you than Hyperides. The latter, by reason of the important service he rendered you, in giving you his protection and the aid of his eloquence in the most critical circumstances, seems to demand of you the greatest regard and to be conferring a favor on you by according you his caresses; whereas the passion of the other can only be irritated in the highest degree by the ill success of his odious enterprise. And so, do you wait for new advances on his part, for the most pressing solicitations; he will offer you gold in profusion." Gold took away her resentment. The Areopagus, which had had no sentence to pronounce in this circumstance, foresaw a possible case of the same sort which might come before it, and in which the same means of defense might be employed; it did not wish to be exposed to those seductions which had subdued the Heliasts; and so, it promulgated a law forbidding advocates to employ any artifice in exciting the pity of judges and forbidding the accused to appear in person before the judges before sentence had been pronounced. Phryne, for her part, fearing a new accusation, not only refrained, thereafter, from taking part in the fetes and religious ceremonies, but busied herself with gaining partisans and, in a manner, winning subjects, even in the bosom of the Areopagus. She opened her bed and her table to gourmands and to libertines; a senator of the Areopagus named Gryllion compromised himself to the point of becoming the *courtezan's parasite*, as Satyrus of Olinthe describes him in his *Pamphile*.

The riches which Phryne had acquired surpassed those of a king; the comic poets, Timocles in his *Nerea*, Amphis in his *Kouris*, and Posidippus in his *Ephesia*, spoke of the scandal which this opulence created. Phryne, however, made an honorable use of it; she caused to be built, at her expense, various public monuments, especially in the city of Corinth, which all the *hetairai* considered as their native country, on account of the money which they had gained there. When Alexander the Great had destroyed Thebes and overthrown its walls, Phryne recalled the fact that she had been born in Boeotia, and she proposed to the Thebans that she rebuild their city from her own funds, with the single condition that this inscription be engraved in her honor: *Thebes was overthrown by Alexander and rebuilt by Phryne.* The Thebans refused to immortalize an obloquy. Phryne, as a woman of Boeotia, had not received from Heaven any gifts of mind; but she was distinguished from the majority of women by a lively feeling for the arts; she regarded herself as a living image of the divine beauty; she paid homage to herself in the works of Apelles and Praxiteles; the one had modeled after her his Venus of Cnidus; the other had painted her as he had seen her at the fetes of Neptune and Venus, coming forth from the waves. Both were her lovers, but Praxiteles won the day over his rival. Phryne demanded of him, as a souvenir of their love, the most beautiful statue which he had ever executed. "Choose!" replied Praxiteles; but she requested a delay of several days in order to make her choice. In the interval, while Praxiteles was at her house, a slave covered with sweat came running up to cry that the atelier of the sculptor was on fire. "Ah! I am lost," said Praxiteles, "if my Satyr and my Cupid are burned" . . . "I choose the Cupid," interrupted Phryne. It was a ruse which she had thought up in order to learn the artist's opinion of his works. Afterwards, Phryne gave the masterpiece to her native city. Caligula caused it to be taken from Thespia and transported to Rome, but Claudius, in one of his praetorian decisions, ordered that the Cupid be restored to the Thespians "in order to appease

the manes of Phryne," as the sentence read. The statue had barely been put back on its vacant pedestal when Nero once more had it brought to Rome, and it perished in the conflagration of that city, which was started by Nero himself. Phryne, however rich she may have been, continued her daily industry to the age of wrinkles and white hair. She boasted of being the possessor of a pomade which entirely concealed wrinkles; she employed so many drugs in rouging herself that Aristophanes was led to remark, in his comedy of the *Orators*, "Phryne has made her cheeks an apothecary's shop," and this line of verse passed into a proverb among the Greeks to designate women who rouged themselves.

The time of her death and the place of her burial are unknown; we merely learn from Pausanias that her friends, her lovers and compatriots were assessed in order to erect a golden statue to her in the temple of Diana at Ephesus; on the plinth, which had for base a column of pentelic marble, was to be read this inscription: "This statue is the work of Praxiteles." It was placed between the statues of two kings, Archinamus, King of Lacedaemonia, and Philip, King of Macedonia, along with the inscription: *To Phryne, an illustrious woman of Thespia.* It was this statue which the philosopher Crates severely characterized by exclaiming: "There is a monument to the impudicity of Greece!" The name of Phryne had become, like that of Lais, a synonym for a beautiful courtezan, and many women of this class called themselves Phryne. In order to distinguish the first Phryne from her humble imitators, the former was called the *Thespian*. Herodicus, in his *History of Those Who Have Been Bantered in the Theatre*, cites a Phryne nicknamed the *Sieve*, for the reason that she ruined her lovers in the same way that a sieve extracts flour mingled with bran. According to Apollodorus in his *Treatise on Courtezans*, there were two Phrynes, nicknamed *Clauxigelaos* (she who makes one weep after having made one laugh) and *Saperdion* (superb fish), but neither the one nor the other seems to have been confounded with the illustrious Thespian.

If Phryne and Lais are the two personifications, the most celebrated if not the most brilliant, of hetairism, Pythionice and Glycera are even better representatives of its power; Pythionice and Glycera were almost queens of Babylon, after having been simple courtesans at Athens. Pythionice was only remarkable for her beauty, but she possessed some of those secrets of debauchery which exercised so much sway over vicious natures and voluptuous temperaments. Glycera, not less beautiful, not less clever, it may be, was, at the same time, more intelligent and wittier. Harpalus, the friend of Alexander of Macedonia and the governor of Babylon, loved them both and was inconsolable for the loss of the first until he had met the second. Harpalus was Alexander's high treasurer, and, when his master had left on the expedition for the Indies, he made no scruple of dipping both hands into the treasury which had been confided to his care. He surpassed in magnificence the ancient kings of Babylon, and he wished to enjoy all the pleasures which gold and power are capable of creating. He had about him the flute players of Miletus, dancers of Lesbos, crown braiders of Cyprus, and slaves and concubines of all lands; he brought an hetaira from Athens who was the most in vogue there, and who best satisfied his libidinous needs. Pythionice enjoyed the honor of being chosen for the pocket money of the little tyrant Harpalus. She was at that time the joint mistress of two brothers, sons of one Choererhiles, who did a business in stale fish, and who owed to this business his immense fortune. The two lovers of Pythionice kept her at great expense, and the comic poet Timocles, in his comedy, *The Icarians*, had bantered the hetaira in these terms on her riches, which, according to her companions, smelled of the sea: "Pythionice will receive you with open arms, in order to get from you, through her caresses, all that I have given you, for she is insatiable. However, ask her for a vat of stale fish; she always has plenty, since she is content with two *saperdes*, not stale and with wide mouths." The *saperde*, the consumption of which was considerable among the lower people, was looked upon as a bad

fish, as the great sophist of the culinary art, Archestratus, solemnly declares. Pythionice, who had been the slave of the flute player Bacchis, who was herself the slave of the hetaira, Synope, became, all of a sudden, a sort of queen in the palace of Babylon, but she did not enjoy so rare a fortune for very long; she died, poisoned, no doubt, and the inconsolable Harpalus gave her a royal funeral. She had by him a daughter who afterward married the sculptor-architect, Charicles, the same whom, Harpalus entrusted with the erection at Athens of a sepulchral monument in memory of Pythionice. This favorite had, moreover, a tomb at Babylon, where she had died. The monument erected by Pericles on the sacred road which led from Athens to Eleusis cost thirty talents (about 250,000 francs in our money). Its size, even more than its architecture, attracted the gaze of the traveler. "Whoever sees it," exclaims Dicaearchus, in his book on the *Descent Into the Cave of Trophonius*, "will probably remark at first, and with reason: that this must be the monument of a Miltiades, a Pericles or a Cimon, or some other great man. 'Undoubtedly, it has been erected at the expense of the republic, or at least by decree of the magistrates.' But when he learns that this monument has been built in memory of the hetaira, Pythionice, what must he think of the city of Athens?" Harpalus had so hastened the work on these funereal structures that they were finished before the end of Alexander's expedition to the Indies. Theopompus, in a letter to the king of Macedonia, affirms that the governor of Babylon employed the enormous sum of two hundred talents for the two tombs of his mistress. "What!" cries the indignant Theopompus, "for a long time we have seen two admirable monuments completed for Pythionice: the one near Athens, the other at Babylon, and he who claimed to be your friend will consecrate with impunity a temple and an altar to a woman who abandoned herself to all those who contributed to her expenses, and he will dedicate this monument as the temple and the altar of Venus Pythionice! Is not this openly to contemn the vengeance of the gods and to fail in the respect which is due to you?"

Alexander was then too occupied in combatting Porus to take any account of what was happening at Babylon or at Athens, where Harpalus was apotheosizing a courtezan.

Harpalus, moreover, had already replaced Pythionice; a simple crown-braider of Sicyone, Glycera, daughter of Thalassis, had won the love of the governor of Babylon, with so much *savoir-faire* that she had become almost a queen at Tarsus, and she would have become a goddess, if Harpalus had survived her. But Alexander returned victorious from the Indes, and felt that he had to punish those of his officers who, during his absence, had paid so little attention to his orders. Harpalus perceived that he was more compromised than the others, and he was frightened, himself, at his own monstrous embezzlements. He fled from Tarsus, with Glycera and all that remained in the treasury, and took refuge in Attica, where he implored the aid of the Athenians against Alexander. He had raised an army of six thousand mercenaries, and he offered to buy, at any price, the protection of Athens; with the aid and in accordance with counsels of Glycera, he corrupted orators, bought the silence of Demosthenes and interested the people in his cause through the distribution of flour, which was called *Glycera's wheat*, and which provided a proverbial locution to signify "the wages of ruin, rather than of success." It is thus that this wheat is distinguished in a satiric comedy of which Harpalus was the hero, and which Alexander caused to be performed throughout all Asia in order to chastise Harpalus' pride. It was even reported that he was the author of this drama, which tells how the magi of Babylon, witnessing the affliction of Harpalus at the death of Pythionice, had promised to call her back from the land of shades to the light of day; but it is more probable that this drama was composed, on the instigation of Alexander, by Python of Catana or of Byzantium. However this may be, Harpalus did not succeed, with the aid of Glycera, of assuring himself of an asylum in the republic of Athens; he was banished thence and retired to Crete, fearing the vengeance of Alexander, who had spared him; but he was assassinated by one

of his own captains, who wished to lay hands on the treasure which Harpalus himself had stolen from the King of Macedonia. Glycera succeeded in escaping and returned, wholly shorn of her grandeur, to Athens, where she resumed her ancient calling of courtezan. She was not longer the Queen of Tarsus, who had received honors little less than divine, and who had had her statue in bronze placed in the temples opposite that of Harpalus; she was an hetaira of age sufficiently advanced and with beauty a little worn, but with a mind that was still indefatigable Lynceus of Samos judged that her bon mots deserved to be collected, and he made such a collection of them which we, however, do not possess. Athenaeus cites a few of them, handed down by the contemporaries of Glycera; we have already reported a number of them. The two which follow may also belong to her. "You are corrupting the youth!" the philosopher Stilpon said to her. . . . "What does it matter if I amuse them," she replied. "You who are a sophist, you corrupt them also, but you bore them." A man who came to buy her favors remarked some eggs in a basket. "Are they raw or cooked?" he asked her to make conversation. . . . "They are silver," she replied maliciously, in order to lead him back to the subject of their conversation.

Her adventures at Babylon and Tarsus had made her the mode; she was regarded as one of the heirs of Harpalus. Glycera, however, attached herself by preference to two men of genius, to the painter, Pausias, and the poet, Menander. The first painted the flowers which she wove into crowns and garlands, endeavoring to imitate and equal the brilliancy of his models; he made a portrait of Glycera, depicted as seated and braiding a crown; this ravishing picture, which was called the *Stephanoplocos* (crown braider), was brought to Rome and purchased by Lucullus, who esteemed it as much as all the other pictures of his collection. The affection of Glycera for Menander lasted longer than her liaison with Pausias. She bore the bad humor, the whims and the chagrins of the comic poet, to whom she acted as

a devoted servant rather than in the role of preferred mistress; Menander frequently reproached her with being no longer what she had been once, and bitterly demanded of her an account of her foolish youth; he was jealous of the past as well as of the present. "You would love me well enough," he told her, "if I had robbed the treasuries of Alexander." She smiled and made no reply to these harsh words, except by showing herself more devoted than ever to his needs. He came back from the theatre one evening sad, irritated and desolated at the ill success of one of his pieces; he was covered with sweat and his throat was dry. Glycera offered him milk, and gently invited him to refresh himself. "This milk smells sour," said Menander, repelling the vase and the hand which offered it; "this milk is repugnant to me; it is covered with a rancid and disgusting cream." It was a cruel allusion to the ceruse and the rouge which hid the wrinkles of Glycera. "Good!" she said gaily, "do not stop at that; leave what is on top and take what is underneath." She loved him truly, and she feared a younger woman might take the affection which she sometimes was able to hold only by artifice, for Menander was changeful and capricious in love; he allowed himself to be held, nevertheless, by the passionate devotion of Glycera, whom he immortalized in his comedies. "I should rather be," said Glycera, "the Queen of Menander than the Queen of Tarsus." Glycera, after her death, did not have a splendid tomb like the *prostitute's monument* (for it was thus the tomb of Pythionice was designated), but her name remained, in the memory of the Greeks, closely bound with that of Menander and was not less celebrated than those of Lais, of Phryne and of Aspasia.



## CHAPTER XIV

**E**GYPT, Phoenicia and Greece had colonized Sicily and Italy and established there their religions, their manners and their customs. Sacred Prostitution, from early times, had not failed to follow the migrations of the goddesses and the gods, who changed climate without changing character. The written monuments, which bear witness to the origin of this sort of Prostitution in the island of Cyclops, and in the peninsula of Saturn, have existed no longer for many centuries, but there are to be found in the Etruscan and Italian-Greek cemeteries, a multitude of painted vases representing different scenes of sacred Prostitution before the foundation of Rome. It is always the same offerings which the virgins brought to the temples of Babylon and of Tyre, of Bubastis and of Naucrates, of Corinth and of Athens. The consecrated one comes and takes her seat in the sanctuary near the goddess' statue; a stranger bargains for the price of her modesty, and she deposits this price upon the altar, which is enriched by this shameful commerce to which the priest alone is an interested party. Such is, according to the funerary vases, the almost invariable form that sacred Prostitution affected in the Egyptian, Poenician and Greek colonies. The cult of Venus was, certainly, the first in point of honor, for it was there, as everywhere else, the most attractive and the most natural; but we are absolutely in ignorance as to the names and attributes taken by the goddess and allegorical of the creation of human beings. These names were so little analogous to those given her in the Roman theogony that the savant Varro, relying on the authority of Macrobius, maintains that Venus was not known at Rome under the kings. But Macrobius and Varro should have stated, merely, that she did not yet possess a temple within the city of Romulus, for she was already adored in Etruria before Rome had subjugated this

land, which was for a long time at war with her. Vitruvius, in his *Treatise on Architecture*, says positively that, according to the principles of the Etruscan soothsayers, the temple of Venus could not be placed anywhere except beyond the walls and near the gates of the city, in order that the distance of the temple from the city might not provide the young people with too frequent an occasion for debauchery and might assure mothers of families of more security.

Sacred Prostitution was not the only form that reigned in primitive Italy; it might be asserted that guest Prostitution and legal Prostitution reigned at the same time, the first in the forests and mountains, the second in the cities. The paintings on the Etruscan vases leave us in no ignorance as to the already refined corruption which had found its way among these aboriginal peoples, who were the blind and gross slaves of their senses and their passions. Sufficient moral deductions may be made from the wealth and variety of the jewels which the women wore, to enable us to judge of the developments of Prostitution, born of feminine coquetry and the needs of the toilet. We see, from a thousand evidences on the painted vases, that the lubricity of these indigenous or exotic peoples knew no social or religious restraint. Bestiality and pederasty were their original vices, and these abominations, naïvely familiar to all ages and ranks of society, found no remedy except in the ceremonies of expiation and purification, which sometimes interfered with the free practice of these vices. As among all ancient peoples, the promiscuity of sexes paid homage to the law of nature and the woman, submissive to the brutal aspirations of the man, was, ordinarily, but the patient instrument of his pleasures; she almost never dared speak out her choice, and she belonged to whomever had the force to take her. The physical conformation of the savage ancestors of the Romans, moreover, shows us all that might be expected of their immodest sensuality; they had virile parts analogous to those of the bull and the dog; they resembled goats, and they wore over the lower part of the loins a sort of tuft of russet hair

which it is impossible to regard as a conventional emblem in the designs which portray that posterior goat-beard, that excrescence at once fleshy and hairy, that rudiment of a true animal's tail. It would be difficult to say at what epoch so strange a symptom of bestial temperament entirely disappeared, but it was preserved in the allegorical iconology as a distinctive characteristic of a satyr and a fawn. Among races so naturally given to carnal love, Prostitution was undoubtedly associated with all the acts of civil and religious life.

It is this Prostitution which is to be discovered in the cradle of Rome, where Remus and Romulus were nourished by a wolf. If we are to believe the old historian Valerius, cited by Aurelius Victor, by Aulus Gellius, and by Macrobius, this wolf was no other than a courtezan, named Acca Laurentia, the mistress of the shepherd Faustulus, who took in the twins who had been abandoned on the banks of the Tiber. Acca Laurentia had been nicknamed the Wolf (*lupa*) by the shepherds of the country, all of whom knew her from having often met her wandering in the woods, and all of whom had enriched her with their gifts. She even possessed, as a result of her prostitutions, the fields which were situated between the seven hills, and which were bequeathed by her to her adopted children, who founded there the Eternal City. Macrobius says, without reticence, that the Wolf had made a fortune by abandoning herself without choice to all who paid her (*meretricio quaestu locupletatam*). And so, the Roman people had for nurse a courtezan, and their point of departure was a *lupanar*.<sup>\*</sup> For this was the name given to the hut of Acca Laurentia, and this name was afterward applied to the impure retreats of women like her, who were named *wolves* in memory of her. We have seen, moreover, that among the Greeks there were *wolves* of the same race. The one who nourished Remus and Romulus who had bought, with the product of her libertinism, the

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\*Which became the Roman name for bawdyhouse or brothel (literally, house of the wolf). *Lupa*, wolf, also became the name for “*a common prostitute, harlot, whore.*” (Andrews: *Latin-English Lexicon.*)

first Roman territory, must have practiced her shameful trade for a long time: *corpus in vulgus dabat*, says Aulus Gellius, *pecuni-amque emeruerat ex eo quaestu uberem*. She died with the reputation of a great courtezan, and fetes, moreover, were instituted in her honor, under the name of the *Lupercales*; if she was not deified with a temple, it was undoubtedly owing to the fear of branding such a temple with the name of *Lupanar*, which had dis-honored her dwelling; the founding of the *Lupercales* was excused on the ground that they were funereal fetes, celebrated in the month of December, on the anniversary of her death; and soon, out of respect for public modesty, the *Lupercalia* were attributed to the god Pan. It would appear, then, that the first fete instituted at Rome by Remus and Romulus, or by their adopted father, the shepherd Faustulus, was one in memory of the wolf Acca Laurentia.

This fete, which existed up to the fifth century after Christ, not without undergoing numerous vicissitudes, was one quite worthy of a courtezan. The *luperci*, priests of the god Pan, their bodies entirely naked with the exception of a girdle of sheep-skin, holding in one hand a bloody knife and in the other a whip, would run through the streets of the city, threatening men with the knife and striking women with the whip. The latter, far from endeavoring to escape the blows, sought them with curiosity and received them with compunction. Here we have the origin of that emblematic foot race which was supposed to be a remedy against the sterility of women and to render the latter pregnant, if the divine whip had touched them in the right place. When the Romans of Romulus had carried off the Sabine women for the sake of wives and children, the women showed themselves at first hesitant to execute what was expected of them; their forced union bore no fruit, although they had no cause to complain of their ravishers. They went to invoke Juno in a wood consecrated to Pan, and the oracle which received them there inspired in them at first a certain apprehension. "It is necessary that a goat," said the oracle, "should make you mothers." One did not have to look far for the

goat; a priest of Pan saved them the trouble by immolating a goat on the spot and by cutting off thongs from the animal's skin, with which he flagellated the Sabine women, who became pregnant as the result of this flagellation, which it was the privilege of the Lupercalia to perpetuate. Latin mythology assigned another origin to this race of the Lupercalia, an origin more poetic but less national. Hercules was traveling with Omphale; a Faun perceived them and followed them into their hiding place in the hope of profiting a moment, when Hercules quitted his beauty to accomplish one of his twelve labors. The two lovers were resting in a grotto and supping together; Hercules and Omphale had changed clothes in order to amuse themselves during the supper; Omphale was wrapped in the lion skin of Nemeus and had put on her back the quiver filled with poisoned arrows; Hercules, uncovering his hairy chest, had put on the necklace and bracelets of his mistress. In this disguise, they were drinking together and had become intoxicated. They fell asleep, each on his own side of the grotto, on a litter of dried leaves, whereupon the Faun entered the cavern and began groping for Omphale's couch. Avoiding prudently the lion's skin, he entered the couch of Hercules. Hercules awoke and chastised the audacious Faun, who had gone a little too far in the matter. It was after this adventure that Pan conceived a horror of the disguise which had deceived his Faun, and he commanded, as a precaution against errors of this sort, that his priests should run absolutely naked at the Lupercalia. There were sacrifices, on that day, of he-goats and she-goats, which the Lupercal priests skinned, in order to clothe themselves in these bloody hides which were reputed to increase the heat of desire and to give a bounding ardor to the lascivious worshipers of the god Pan. Sacred Prostitution was thus the soul of the Lupercalia.

These were not the only fetes or the only cult which Prostitution has established at Rome before Venus. Under the reign of Ancus Martius, a courtezan named Flora took to herself the name of Acca Laurentia in memory of the nurse of Remus and Rom-

ulus. She was of a singular beauty, but she was no longer rich. She passed a night in the temple of Hercules in order to obtain the protection of that powerful god. Hercules announced to her in a dream that the first person she should meet upon leaving the temple would bring her happiness. She met a patrician named Tarutius, who had considerable property. He no sooner saw her than he fell in love with her and wished to marry her. He made her his heir upon his death, and Flora, to whom this marriage had given a position, thereupon took up her ancient trade of courtezan and acquired by it an enormous fortune, which she left as a heritage to the Roman people. Her legacy was accepted, and the Senate, to show its gratitude, decreed that the name of Flora should be inscribed among the *fasti* of the state and that solemn fetes should perpetuate the memory of the generosity of this courtezan. But later, the solemn honors paid a woman of evil life weighed upon the conscience of respectable folk, and so, in order to rehabilitate the courtezan, the idea was hit upon of apotheosizing her. Flora was, from then on, the goddess of flowers, and the *Florales* continued to be celebrated with much splendor in the month of April or at the beginning of May. At the celebration of these fetes, the revenues left by Flora were employed, and when these revenues were no longer sufficient, about the year 513 B. C., the fines resulting from convictions for the crime of peculation were devoted to this purpose. The fetes of Flora, which were known as those of Flora and Pomona, always kept the stigmata attaching to their founder; the magistrate sometimes suspended them, but the people renewed them when the season seemed to predict drought and a poor harvest. For six days they would crown with flowers the statues and the altars of the gods and goddesses, the doors of houses and festal chalices; they would strew with fresh grass the streets and public places; they would indulge in imitations of the chase, pursuing hares and rabbits (*cuniculi*), which courtezans alone had the right to take alive, when they fled under the latter's robes. The aediles, who had supreme direction of the *Floralia*, would toss into the crowd a

shower of beans, dried peas and other leguminous grains, which the people fought for with their fists. This was not all: these fetes, which the courtezans looked upon as their own, gave rise to horrible disorders in the Circus. The courtezans would come out from their houses *en cortége*. Preceded by trumpets and wrapped in more than ample garments, under which they were naked and adorned with all their jewels, they would assemble in the Circus, under the eyes of the people, who thronged about them, and there they would divest themselves of their habits and display themselves in a most indecent nudity, showing complacently all that the spectators desired to see and accompanying with infamous movements this immodest exhibition; they would run, dance, wrestle and leap like athletes and mountebanks, and each of their lascivious postures would draw cries and applause from the delirious populace. Of a sudden, men, equally nude, would burst into the arena to the sound of trumpets, and a frightful mêlée of Prostitution would take place publicly, with new transports on the part of the multitude. One day, Cato, the austere Cato, appeared in the Circus at the moment the aediles were about to give the signal for the games; but the presence of this great citizen restrained the orgy which had been about to burst forth. The courtezans remained clad, the trumpets silent, the people waiting. Some one observed to Cato that he was the only obstacle to the celebration of the games; whereupon he rose, drawing his toga over his face, and left the Circus. The people clapped their hands, the courtezans disrobed themselves, the trumpets sounded and the spectacle was on.

We have here, certainly, the most brazen example of Prostitution that was ever carried on under the auspices of a goddess, and we understand from it that this goddess had been originally a brazen courtezan. The cult of Prostitution was more veiled in the temples of Venus. The most ancient of these temples at Rome appeared to have been that of Venus Cloacina. In the early days of the republic, when they were cleaning out the great Cloaca, built by King Tarquin to carry off through the Tiber the

wastes of the city, a statue was found buried in the mud; it was a statue of Venus. The question was not raised as to how it had come there, but a temple was dedicated to it under the name of Venus Cloacina. Prostitutes came to seek their fortunes in the neighborhood of this temple and near the drain which was not far away; they reserved a part of their wages as an offering to the goddess, whose altar called for a perpetual throng of votive offerings. Venus had altars more respectable and temples less frequented in the twelve regions or quarters of Rome. Venus the Placid, the Bald Venus, Venus Genetrix, or the one who engenders, Venus Verticordia, or the one who changes hearts, Venus Erycine, Venus the Victorious and other Venuses, decent enough, lent no encouragement to Prostitution; they barely tolerated it for the sake of the priests, who gave themselves to it secretly. There were also Venuses who presided exclusively over the most secret mysteries of love. The temple of Venus Volupia, situated in the tenth quarter, drew debauchees of both sexes, who came there to demand inspirations from the goddess. The temple of Venus Salacia, or the Lascivious, whose exact situation in Rome is not known, was visited by courtezans who wished to perfect themselves in their trade. The temple of Venus Lubentia,\* or the Libertine (rather, *of good will*), was situated outside the walls in the midst of a wood which lent a propitious shade to the encounters of lovers. Venus, under her different names, always made an appeal to the instincts of pleasure, if not of debauchery; but her temples at Rome, unlike those in Greece and Asia Minor, were not dishonored by an open traffic in Prostitution. There were in these temples only courtezans who carried their piety towards the goddess to such an extent as to sell themselves for her profit; and in any case, the sacrifice was never accom-

\*The word was also written *Libentia* (cf. Latin *libens*, *libet*, etc.), *Libentina* and *Libitina*. There is a Libentia, *goddess of delight*, mentioned by Plautus, *Asin.*, 2, 2, 2. Libentina was *the goddess of sensual pleasure*. Varro refers to the latter, as does Cicero in his *De Natura Deorum*: *lucus Veneris Lubentiae*. Varro, in his *De Lingua Latina*, gives us: “*A lubendo libido, libidinosus ac Venus Libentia et Libitina.*” (6, 6, 63, Sect. 47, ed. Müell.)

plished in the interior of the temple, at least not unless the priest officiated at the sacrifice.

One never gets the impression from the Latin writers that the temples of Venus at Rome had colleges of consecrated priestesses, who prostituted themselves for the benefit of the altar, as was still the case at Corinth and at Eryx in the time of the Emperors. Strabo reports, in his geography, that the famous temple of Venus Erycine in Sicily was still filled with women attached to the cult of the goddess and given to her altars by suppliants who wished to render the goddess favorable to their vows; these consecrated slaves might redeem themselves with money which they gained in Prostitution, of which only a part belonged to the temple which protected them. This temple fell in ruins during the reign of Tiberius, who, in his character of Venus' relative, caused it to be restored and filled with new priestesses. As to the temples of Rome, they were all of one dimension, very narrow, so that the body of the edifice was only large enough to hold the altar and the statue of the goddess with the sacrificial instruments; the people did not enter the interior, and the fetes of Venus, as in those of the other gods, the ceremony took place in the open air, under the portico and on the steps of the sanctuary. This architectural form would seem to exclude all idea of sacred Prostitution, at least any dependent on the temple itself. The Romans, moreover, in adopting the religion of the Greeks, had fashioned it to their own manners, and the skeptical spirit of this people was poorly adapted to acts of faith and abnegation which must, in order not to be odious and ridiculous, be surrounded with a veil of candor and of naïveté: the Romans did not believe any too much in the divinity of their gods. It is, therefore, certain that the fetes of Venus at Rome were fairly chaste or rather decent in all that pertained to a cult, but that they served merely as a pretext for orgies and debaucheries of every nature, which took place in the houses. When Julius Caesar, who prided himself on being descended from Venus, gave a new impulse to the cult of his divine ancestor, he dedicated to her temples and statues on behalf of the whole

Roman empire, caused solemn games to be celebrated in her honor, and directed in person the magnificent fetes which he restored or which he established for her: the thought did not occur to him of giving new life, under these auspices, to sacred Prostitution; he avoided also, wholly debauched as he himself was, having anything to do with the indecent personifications of Venus who, as Lubentia, Volupia, Salacia, etc., was none other than the goddess of courtezans. One should remark, moreover, that Venus Courtezan never had a chapel at Rome.

They adored there, above all, Venus the Victorious, who seemed to be the great protector of the nation which had sprung from Aeneas, but they did not recall on what occasion it was Venus had first been adored as Venus the Armed. The latter was of Spartan and not of Roman origin, for Venus, before being the Victorious, had been the Armed. In the heroic days of Lacedaemonia, all the able-bodied men had left the city to go and besiege Messana;\* the besieged Messanians sallied forth, in turn, from their walls and made a night march in order to surprise Lacedaemonia, which had been left without defenders; but the Lacedaemonians hastily armed themselves and went forth proudly to meet the enemy, whom they put to flight. On their side, the Spartans, advised of the danger which threatened their city, had lifted the siege of Messana and had come back to defend their firesides. They saw from afar the gleam of helmets, or cuirasses and of lances; they thought they had fallen in with the Messanians and prepared for combat; but as they drew near, the women, to reveal their identity, raised their tunics and revealed their sex. Ashamed of themselves, the Lacedaemonians hurled themselves with open arms on these valiant women and did not even give them time to disarm themselves. There followed an amorous melee which engendered the cult of the armed Venus. "Venus," cries the poet of the Greek *Anthology*, "Venus, you who love to laugh and to frequent the nuptial chamber, where have you taken these warlike arms? You like gay songs, and harmonious sounds of

\*The city in the Peloponnesus, not in Sicily.

the flute, in the company of the blond Hymen: then why these arms? Is it not enough for you to have overthrown the terrible Mars? Oh! how powerful Venus is!" Ausonius, in imitating this epigram, makes the goddess say: "If I can conquer naked, why should I bear arms?" And so, the Venus Victrix of Rome was nude, with a helmet on her head and a spear in her hand.

The public fetes of Venus were, then, much less indecent than those of Lupa and of Flora; they were voluptuous but not obscene, with the exception of the mystic episode which took place under the eyes of a small number of privileged ones, and which afterwards struck those persons to whom it was told, with details more or less marvelous, as a prodigy of the imagination. The poet Claudian does not tell us in what temple this ingenious and amusing *tour de physique* took place. An ivory statue of the goddess, representing her as nude, was placed upon a bed of roses; to the same couch was brought, at some little distance from Venus, a statue of Mars covered with steel armor. It did not take many moments for the mystery to be accomplished; the two statues moved simultaneously and hurled themselves against each other with so much force that it seemed they would break to splinters; but they remained tightly embraced and trembling in the midst of rose leaves. The whole secret of this mythologic scene lay in the belly of the ivory statue, which contained a lodestone, the attractive power of which acted upon the steel in the statue of Mars. But this invention must have belonged to a very advanced stage. The first Romans dealt less artistically with their early Venuses. One of these was Venus Myrtea, so called on account of a grove of myrtle which surrounded her temple, situated in all probability near the Capitolium. The myrtle was sacred to Venus; it was employed in the purifications which preceded the nuptial ceremony. Tradition had it that the Roman ravishers of the Sabines had been crowned with myrtle as sign of amorous victory and conjugal fidelity. Venus was similarly crowned with myrtle after having vanquished Juno and Pallas in the beauty contest. And so, myrtle crowns were offered to all

the Venuses, and wise matrons, who adored only the decent Venuses, held the myrtle in horror, as Plutarch informs us, for the reason that the myrtle was at once the emblem and provoker of sensual pleasures. Venus Myrtea took the name of Murtia when her temple was transferred near the Circus on Mount Aventine, which was also called Murtius. Then the young virgins no longer feared to go to invoke Venus Murtia, offering her dolls and statuettes, made of terra cotta or wax, which certainly recalled, unknown to the suppliants, the ancient custom of consecrating oneself to the goddess by making to her the sacrifice of one's virginity. This sacrifice, which had been so frequent and so general in the cult of Venus, perpetuated itself still in the form of symbolism, and everywhere the brutal fact was replaced by allusions more or less transparent. Thus, when the Romans occupied Phrygia and established themselves in the Troad, which they regarded as the cradle of their race, they met there with a custom which went back to the cult of Venus, and which had replaced the material fact of sacred Prostitution; the young girls, a few days before their marriage, would dedicate themselves to Venus by bathing in the river Scamander, where the three goddesses had bathed themselves while preparing to appear before their judge, the shepherd, Paris. "Scamander," the Trojan girl who gave herself to the caressing waves of this sacred river would cry, "Scamander, receive my virginity!"

The cult of Venus at Rome did not call for sacrifices of the same sort; the courtezans were, however, most assiduous at the altars of the goddess, who, by the etymology of her name, appealed to everyone and everything (*quia venit ad omnia*, says Cicero, in his treatise on the Nature of the Gods; *quod ad cunctos veniat*, says Arnobius, in his book against the Gentiles). The courtezans offered her, by preference, the signs or instruments of their profession, blond wigs, combs, mirrors, girdles, pins, slippers, whips, bells and many other objects which had to do with the secrets of their trade. They would divest themselves of their jewels and their ornaments as a gift to the goddess, who was to

render double payment to those who invoked her. Some, in their offerings, expressed a greater disinterestedness, and their lovers presented themselves with offerings not less touching: one would offer a lamp which had been a witness of his happiness, the other a torch and a lever which had assisted him in burning down and breaking in the door of his mistress; the greater number brought ithyphallic lamps and votive phalli. In honor of Venus, the mother of love, there were sacrifices of she-goats and he-goats, of doves and pigeons, which the goddess had adopted as her own on account of their zeal for her cult; but if the ceremonies and the fetes of Venus did not in any way offend against modesty in the temples, they authorized and excited many debauches in the houses, especially among the young debauchees and the courtesans. The most turbulent of these venereal fetes took place in the month of April, a month consecrated to the goddess of love for the reason that all the germs of Nature are developed during this regenerative month and the earth seems then, in a manner, to open its bosom to the kisses of the spring. The nights of April were passed in supping, drinking, dancing, singing and celebrating the praises of Venus in the verdant cradles and the shelters of branches interlaced with flowers. These nights were called the *Eves of Venus*, and all the Roman youth took part in them with all the fury of youth, while the old men and the married women locked themselves in their dwellings under the tutelary gaze of their lares, in order not to hear the joyful cries, the songs and the dances. Sometimes, on the occasion of these April fetes, but only in certain dissolute companies, there were dances and licentious pantomimes, representing the principal circumstances in the story of Venus; represented in turn were the Judgment of Paris, the Fillets of Vulcan, the Loves of Adonis and other scenes from this impure but poetic mythology; the actors who took part in these pantomimes were completely nude, and they were forced to render, by means of the most expressive dumb-show, the deeds and amorous gestures of the gods and goddesses; so that Arnobius, in speaking of these plastic diversions, says that Venus,

the mother of the sovereign people, became, in them, a drunken Bacchante, abandoning herself to all the immodesties and all the infamies of courtezans (*regnatoris et populi procreatrix amans saltatur Venus, et per affectus omnes meretriciae vilitatis impudica exprimitur imitatione bacchari*). Arnobius says, moreover, that the goddess must have blushed at viewing the horrible indecencies which were attributed to her Adonis.

The Roman women, a strange thing! so reserved with regard to the cult of Venus, made no scruple of exposing their modesty in the practice of certain cults more indecent and more shameful, which only had to do however with certain subordinate gods and goddesses; they offered sacrifices to Cupid, to Priapus, to Priapus above all, to Mutinus, to Tutana, to Tychon, to Pertunda and to other divinities of the same order. Not only did these sacrifices and these offerings take place in the interior of the domestic dwellings, but they even took place in the public chapels, before statues erected at street corners and in the public places of the city. It was not the courtezans who so addressed themselves to this mysterious Olympus of sensual love; Venus, under her multiple names and varied forms, was sufficient for them; it was the matrons, it was, even, the virgins who permitted themselves the practice of these secret and impudent cults; they indulged in them only under veils, it is true, before sunrise or after sunset; but they did not tremble, they did not blush at being seen in the act of adoring Priapus and his brazen cortége. It may be believed, then, that they preserved the purity of their hearts despite the presence of these impure images, which displayed their monstrous obscenity everywhere, in the streets, in the gardens and in the fields, under the pretext of driving away robbers and birds. It is difficult to be precise as to the epoch at which the god of Lampsacum was introduced and vulgarized at Rome. His cult, which was scandalously widespread among the most respectable classes of women, does not appear to have been regulated by the fixed law of religious ceremonial. This god had not even a temple served by priests or priestesses; but his phalliphoric statues were

almost as many in number as his feminine adorers, who exhibited, in their more or less ingenious devotions, the different forms of the cult which was paid this villainous god. Priapus, who represents, under a human form, largely endowed with the attributes of generation, the soul of the universe and the procreative force of matter, had only been admitted at a very late period into the Greek theology; he made his appearance still later among the Romans, who did not take him seriously, with his he-goat horns, his she-goat ears and his insolent emblem of virility. The Roman women, on the contrary, honored him, so to speak, with their particular protection, and did not treat him as an impudent and ridiculous god. This Priapus, whom the mythologies had made a natural son of Venus and of Bacchus, was no more than a degenerate incarnation of Mendes, or the Horus of the Egyptians, who also personified the generative principles of the world. But the Roman dames did not seek so far for the origin of things; their favored deity presided over the pleasures of love, the duties of marriage and all the erotic economy. It was this which distinguished him particularly from Pan, with whom he possessed more than one trait in common with regard to appearance and attributes. He was given, ordinarily, the form of a Hermes, and he was employed for the same purpose as were the boundaries set up in the gardens, the vineyards and the fields, which it was his duty to protect with his club or stick.

The antique monuments have made us acquainted with the various sacrifices which Priapus received at Rome and throughout the Roman empire; he was crowned with flowers or foliage; he was enveloped in garlands; he was presented with fruits; sometimes with nuts, as an allusion to the mysteries of marriage; sometimes with apples in memory of the judgment of Paris; they burned before him, on a portable altar, the flower of wheat, chick peas and burdock; they danced, to the sounds of the lyre or the flute, about his pedestal, and they surrendered themselves, with more or less abandon, to the inspirations of his lubricious image. The only thing which distinguished, in these sacrifices, the re-

spectable from the debauched women, was the veil behind which the former sheltered their modesty. Sometimes the gilded or flowering coronals dedicated to the god of Lampsacum were not placed on his head but were suspended from the most indecent part of the statue. *Cingemus tibi mentulam coronis!* cries a poet of the Priapians. Another poet of the same persuasion applauds a courtezan named Telethuse, who, laden with flowers in the profits of Prostitution, offered in this fashion a golden crown to Priapus (*cingit inaurata penem tibi, sancte, corona*), whom she qualified with the name of *holy*. The Priapic attribute occurs incessantly as an emblematic figure in many circumstances of private life, and the most modest glances, from force of seeing this image so multiplied, with a thousand capricious objects in view, could no longer meet it with indifference. It was sometimes a bell or a lamp or a torch or a jewel or some small article in bronze, in silver, in ivory, in horn; it was, principally, an amulet, which women and children wore about the neck to guard against maladies and philtres; it was, the same as in Egypt, the tutelary guardian of love and the auxiliary of generation. Painters and sculptors were pleased to give it wings or paws or talons\* to express the fact that it tore to pieces, that it walked and that it flew away into the domain of Venus. This obscene object had, then, lost in a manner its obscene character, and the mind was almost unused to recognizing what the eyes no longer saw. But the cult of Priapus was none the less an occasion and an excuse for a great many secret impurities.

This cult included, in addition, that of the god Mutinus, Mutunus or Tutunus, who did not differ from Priapus except by the position of his statues. He was represented seated in place of standing upright; moreover, his statues, which were never numerous, were hidden in closed pavilions, surrounded by a grove which the profaned were not permitted to enter. This Mutinus descended in a direct line from the ithyphallic idol of the prim-

\*Cf. the work of some of our modern erotic "artists"—the Marquis de Bayross, e. g.—from whom it is not hard to trace the lineage of an artist like George Grosz.

itive peoples of Asia; he served, also, the same purpose and perpetuated at Rome the most ancient form of sacred Prostitution. Young brides were conducted to this idol before being taken to their husbands, and they would seat themselves on his knees as though to offer him their virginity: *in celebratione nuptiarum*, says St. Augustine, *super Priapi scapum nova nupta sedere jubebatur*. Lactantius seems to imply that they did not content themselves with occupying this indecent seat: *Et Muturnus*, he says, *in cuius sinu pudendo nubentes praesident, ut illarum pudicitiam prior deus delibasse videatur*. This libation of virginity became sometimes an act that was real and consummated. Then, once married, those women who wished to combat sterility would return to visit the god, who would receive them once more upon his knees and render them fecund. Arnobius reports, with a shudder, the horrible details of this sacrifice: *Etiam ne Tutunus, cuius immanibus pudendidis, horrentique fascino, vestras inequitare matronas et auspicable ducitis et optatis?* We must go back to the hideous practices of the religions of India and Syria to find an analogous example of sacred Prostitution; but in the Orient, in the first ages of the world, the generative and regenerative god possessed a solemn cult, which was paid to him in the light of day, and which symbolized the fecundity of Mother Nature, whereas at Rome, this cult, fallen into a decline, hid itself shamefully in the shadow of a chapel to which public contempt had relegated the infamous god Mutinus. This chapel had first been erected in a quarter called Velia, at the extremity of the city; it was destroyed during the reign of Augustus, who desired to abolish the retreat. But the cult of this frightful Mutinus was so profoundly established in the manners of the people that it was necessary to reerect his pavilion in the fields of Rome and thereby give satisfaction to young brides and sterile women, who came there in veils, not merely from all quarters of the city but also from the most remote points of Italy.

Some savants have advanced the theory, following the testimony of Festus, that the chapel of Mutinus included, besides the

statue of the god, that of his wife, Tutuna, or Mutuna, who was only there to preside over the mysteries of the virginization, and who did not see anyone sitting upon his knees. The goddess, whose name, derived from the Greek, expressed the feminine sex and described her special character, had a posture no more decent than those of the suppliants who addressed her husband. One must not, however, confuse Mutuna with Pertunda, the hermaphroditic goddess who possessed no other sanctuary than the chamber of bridegrooms on their wedding nights. This Pertunda, whom St. Augustine proposed to call rather the god *Pretundus* (the one who strikes the first), was brought into the nuptial bed and there, sometimes, according to Arnobius, took upon himself a role as delicate as that of the husband: *Pertunda in cubiculis praesto est virginalem scrobem effodientibus maritis.* There was here a singular trace of sacred Prostitution, although the goddess did not receive as a sacrifice the virginity of the bride, but assisted the bridegroom in immolating it. One summoned also, on the first wedding night, another goddess and another god, equally enemies of conjugal chastity, the god *Subigus* and the goddess *Prima*: the god being charged with teaching the bridegroom his duty, the goddess with teaching the same to the bride: *ut subata asponso viro*, one reads with surprise in the *City of God* of St. Augustine, *non se commoveat, cuum premitur*. As to the little gods, Tychon and Orthanes, they were but the humble appendages of the great Priapus, and they did not figure at the court of Venus except as lascivious instigators to sacred Prostitution.

We are in ignorance, nevertheless, as to who these immodest gods were, whose names we barely find cited by the obscure Lycophron and by Diodorus of Sicily; we do not even know over what particular form of pleasure they presided, and we are enabled to make no conjecture based upon the evidence of their images and their cults. It is not impossible that these gods, who are recalled to us by no figurative monument, were the same who had been introduced into Etruria in the year of Rome 566, the year 186 B. C., by a miserable Greek of low extraction, half priest and

half soothsayer. These unknown gods, whose names history has not even preserved, gave authority to a cult so monstrous and mysteries so abominable that public indignation insisted upon their being branded and condemned. The women alone, at first, were devoted to the new gods, with infamous ceremonies, which, nevertheless, attracted a great number, drawn by curiosity and love of libertinism. The men were admitted, in their turn, to the practice of this odious cult, which poisoned all Etruria, and which made its way to Rome. There were soon, in this city, more than seven thousand initiates of both sexes; their principal chiefs and high priests were: M. C. Attinius, of the lower class of Rome; L. Opiternius, from the country of the Falisci, and Menius Cer-  
cinius of the Campania. They termed themselves, audaciously, the founders of a new religion; but the Senate, informed of the execrable practices of this parasitic cult, proscribed it by law and ordered that all the instruments and sacred objects be destroyed, decreeing the death penalty for anyone who should labor in such a manner to corrupt the public morality. A number of priests, who gave these initiations despite the prohibition of the Senate, were arrested and given the supreme penalty. Nothing less than this rigorous application of the law could stop the progress of a cult which addressed itself to the grossest appetites of human nature. It is to be presumed that the traces of this sacred debauchery were never effaced in the manners and beliefs of the lower class of Rome.

There were, it may be, intimate analogies between this strange cult, which the Senate endeavored to wipe out, and the cult of Isis, which was equally and on many occasions the object of proscriptions on the part of the magistrates. We do not know at what period the cult of Isis was introduced at Rome for the first time; we know only that it came there disguised under an Asiatic form, quite different from its Egyptian origin. In Egypt, the mysteries of Isis, the generatrix of all things, were not always chaste and irreproachable, but they represented, in allegories, the creation of the world and of human beings, the destiny of

man, the quest of wisdom and the future life of souls. Among the Romans, as in Asia, these mysteries were but pretexts and occasions for disorderly conduct of all sorts; in them, Prostitution, above all, occupied first place. This is why the temple of the goddess at Rome was ten times demolished and ten times rebuilt; that is why the Senate only tolerated the followers of Isis because of the interested protection shown them by a few rich and powerful citizens; that is why, despite the prodigious extension of the cult of Isis under the emperors, respectable folk recoiled from it in horror and despised nothing so much as a priest of Isis. Apuleius, in his *Golden Ass*, gives us a description, greatly toned down, of these mysteries into which he had had himself initiated, and whose secret ceremonies he did not permit himself to reveal; he shows us a solemn procession, in which a priest bears in his arms the venerable effigy of the all-powerful goddess, an effigy which has in it nothing of the bird, nor the wild or domestic quadruped, and which does not any more resemble man, but which is venerable for its very strangeness, and which ingeniously characterizes the profound mysticism and the inviolable secrets with which this august religion is surrounded. Before this effigy, which was nothing else than a golden phallus, accompanied by emblems of love and fecundity, there was to be seen a throng of initiates, men and women of every age and every rank, clad in linen robes of dazzling whiteness: the women surrounding with transparent veils their hair, inundated with essences; the men, shaved to the roots of their hair, waving sistrons of metal. But Apuleius is prudently silent about what took place in the sanctuary of the temple, where the initiation was effected to the sound of bells and sistrons. All the writers of antiquity have preserved silence on the subject of this initiation, which must have been synonymous with Prostitution. Emperors themselves did not blush to be initiated, and to take, for the purpose, a dog's head for a mask, in honor of Anubis, the son of Isis.

It was, then, this goddess, rather than Venus, who presided over sacred Prostitution at Rome and throughout the Roman empire.

She had temples and chapels everywhere at the period of the greatest depravity of manners. The principal temple she had at Rome was in the field of Mars; its property, its gardens and its caves for initiations must have been considerable, for the initiates who took part in solemn procession at the fetes of Isis were estimated at several thousand men and women. There was, moreover, within the sacred enclosure a permanent commerce in debauchery, to which the priests of Isis, stained with all vices and capable of all crimes, lent their complacent assistance. These priests formed a college sufficiently numerous which lived in an impure familiarity; they gave themselves to all the distractions of the senses, to all the outbursts of passion; they were always drunken and gorged with food; they promenaded in the streets of the city in their linen robes, covered with stains and filth, the dog's head mask upon their faces, the sistrum in their hands; they asked alms by sounding their sistrum and they would knock at doors, threatening with the wrath of Isis those who did not give to them. They exercised, at the same time, the shameful trade of *lenones* ;\* they busied themselves, in competition with the old courtezans, in all sorts of amorous negotiations and correspondence, rendezvous, traffics and seductions. Their temple and their gardens served as an asylum to lovers, whom they protected, and to adulterers, whom they disguised under linen veils and vestments. Husbands and jealous lovers never entered with impunity these places, consecrated to pleasure, where were to be seen only amorous couples, and where nothing was to be heard but sighs, stifled by the sounds of sistums. Juvenal, in his Satires, speaks often of the habitual usages in the sanctuaries of the temples of Isis: "Quite recently," he says, in his Ninth Satire, addressed to Noevolus, "you defiled regularly with your adulterous presence the sanctuary of Isis, the temple of Peace, where Ganymede has a statue, the mysterious retreat of the Good Goddess, the chapel of

\**Leno*: pimp; panderer. Our author consistently employs the Gallicized form, *lenon*, which is the stem of the Latin word, and it has been deemed best hereafter to adopt this form and, for purposes of convenience, to treat it as an English word in this translation.

Ceres (for where is the temple in which women do not prostitute themselves?) and, what you do not confess, you even directed your assaults towards husbands." This double Prostitution was, then, tolerated, if not authorized and encouraged, in all the temples of Rome, especially those which had, for purposes of concealment, a nearby laurel or myrtle wood.

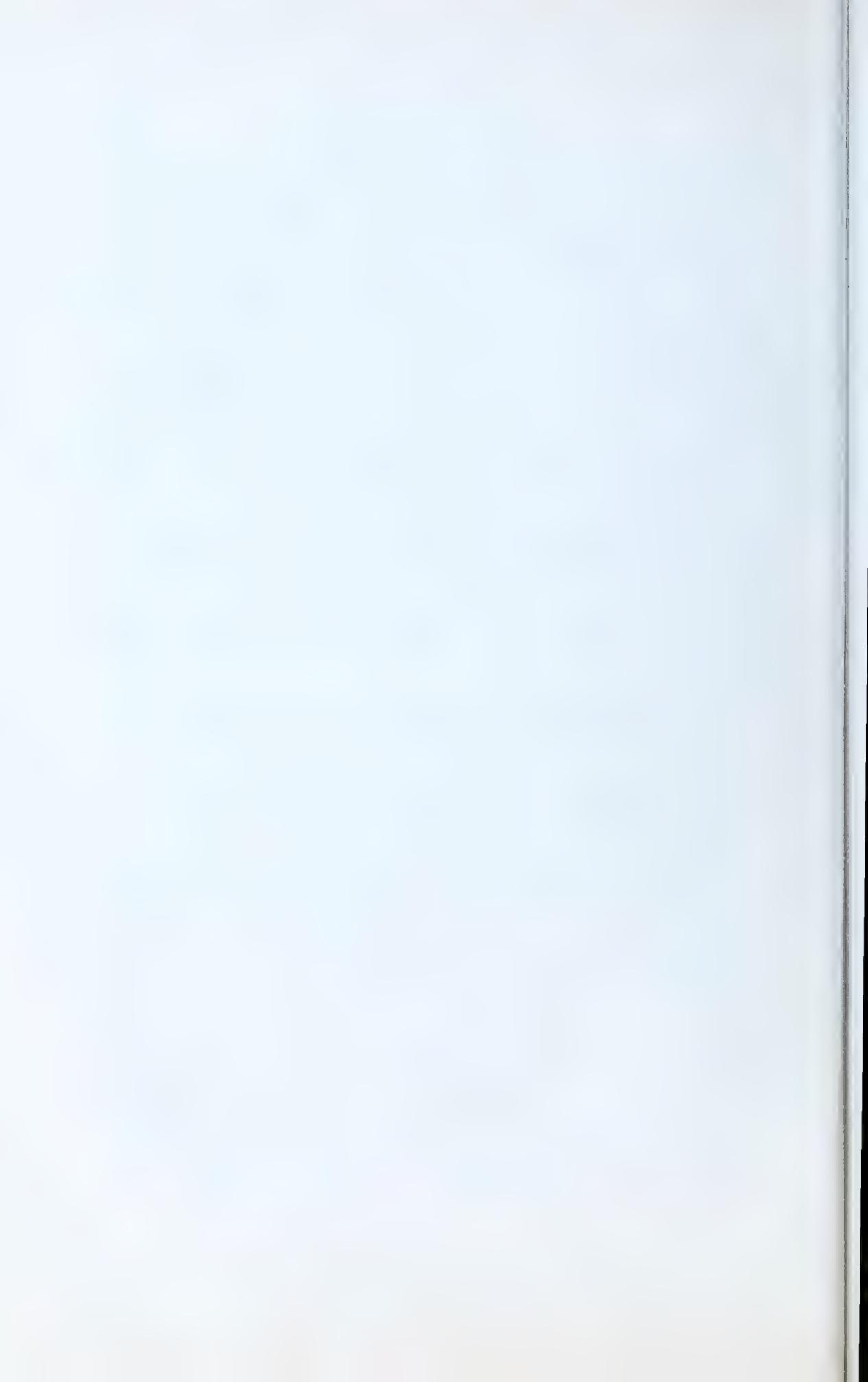
The cult of Isis was also connected with that of Bacchus, who was adored as one of the divine incarnations of Osiris. The mythology of this victorious god possessed too many points of contact with that of Venus for the god and goddess not to be honored in the same manner, that is to say, by the fetes of Prostitution. These fetes were celebrated, under the name of mysteries, along with frightful excesses. Libertines and courtezans were the zealous and fervent actors in them; the ones played the role of male, the others of female Bacchantes; they would run all night long, half naked, with disheveled hair, girdled with vine leaves and with ivy, shaking torches and thyrsi, with cymbals, drums, trumpets and bells; while sometimes they were disguised as Fauns and went mounted upon asses. The whole of this bacchic cult symbolized one and the same act of Prostitution: now, one drank from glass or earthen chalices in the form of a phallus; now, one hoisted enormous phalli on the ends of thyrsus wands; the priestesses of the god carried around his temple the phallus, the van and the basket, as in the processions in honor of Isis, where the three emblems represented the male nature, the female nature and the union of the two; for the cyst or mystic basket contained a serpent gnawing at its tail, while the cakes it contained were in the form of a phallus and that of a van. One may understand the incredible disorders which resulted from a cult wholly erotic in its nature and so dear to debauched youth. The joyous band, drunken with wine, had the right to dispose of the men and women whom it met by hazard in its nocturnal races, and whom it pursued with furious cries, with mocking laughter, with obscene word and indecent gesture. Decent women hid themselves with fright in their houses the moment the hour of the bacchanalia sounded; and when they heard the delirious initiates

passing in front of their door, they would offer a sacrifice to their lares, invoking Juno and Modesty; in addition, Bacchus was adored as an hermaphroditic god and in the infamous conventicles in the interior of the temple, the men became women and the women men, amid a nameless orgy, at once inspired and regulated by the sound of the sacred drum.

And in all these shameful fetes which dishonored the divinities of Rome, the courtezans, faithful to a tradition the origin of which they could not explain, continued to draw a profit from their stupra and from their prostitutions (*Prostibula*); they reserved for themselves only a certain proportion of the wages of their trade, and they would deposit the rest upon the altars of the god and goddess, in case the priests themselves were not accomplices in this shameful traffic, which took place within the enclosure of the temple. “We have, today, the traffic of courtezans in the temple of Venus,” says a courtezan in the *Poenulus* of Plautus; “there the merchants of love assemble, and there I want to show myself.”

*Ad aedem Veneris hodie est mercatus meretricius;  
Eo convenient mercatores, ibi ego me ostendi volo.*

Courtezans at Rome were not, as in Greece, kept at a distance from the altars; they frequented, on the contrary, all the temples, undoubtedly in the hope of finding there fortunate chances of gain; they came there, also, to show their thanks to the divinity who had been propitious to them, and they brought to his sanctuary that portion of their gain which they believed to be his due. Religion closed its eyes on this impure source of revenues and offerings; civil legislation did not concern itself with the details of this indecent devotion, which had to do with a cult; and so, thanks to this tolerance or, rather, systematic absence of judiciary control, sacred Prostitution at Rome came near preserving its primitive attractions and physiognomy, with this difference always, that it did not originate in the courtezan class, and that it had become a foreign accessory to the cult, in place of being an integral part in the cult itself.



## CHAPTER XV

LEGAL Prostitution was not established at Rome under a regular form until well after the foundation of the city, which was not at first sufficiently populous to sacrifice to public debauchery the most useful portion of its inhabitants. Women had been lacking to the Romans for the purpose of forming legitimate unions, to such a degree that they had had to have recourse to the rape of the Sabines; women were lacking for a long time afterward, so far as prostitutes were concerned. One might, therefore, advance with certitude the theory that legal Prostitution was introduced into the city of Romulus by foreign women, who came there to seek their fortune, and who there exercised freely their shameful industry, until the urban police judged it prudent to organize this industry and lay down laws for it. But it is impossible to assign this invasion of Roman manners by the courtezans and the immodest debut of the latter in the theater of legal Prostitution to one epoch rather than to another. The forceful memory which Romulus' nurse, Acca Laurentia, had left the Romans was soon hidden and effaced under the cloak of the Lupercalia; and when the beautiful Flora had revived them for a moment by attempting to place them once more in honor, these ceremonies were once more absorbed into and disguised under a popular fete, the very indecencies of which no longer possessed an allegoric sense for the people who participated in them with frenzy. Magistrates and priests, moreover, were bent upon attributing the Lupercalia to the god Pan, and the Floralia to the goddess of flowers and springtime, just as though they were ashamed of the origin of these solemn feasts of Prostitution. Acca Laurentia and Flora were, then, the first prostitutes at Rome; but we should not consider their presence in the rising city as anything more than an exception, and it is perhaps by this

circumstance that we must explain the considerable riches which they, one and the other, acquired at a time in which no public opposition to them existed. A learned jurist of the sixteenth century, struck by this bizarre detail, has desired to see in Acca Laurentia and, above all, in Flora, the unique and official prostitute of the Roman people, resembling the queen of the bees, who alone is sufficient to her hive; and he draws from it this incredible conclusion, that a woman, in order to be brazenly and notoriously recognized as a public prostitute, must first have abandoned herself to 23,000 men.

From the reign of Romulus, if we are content to study it in the pages of Titus Livius, marriage was instituted in such a manner as to remove all excuse for divorce and adultery, for marriage, considered from the political point of view in the new colony, had for its principal object the attaching of citizens to their domestic firesides and the creation of a family about the bridal couple. There had been, at first, an almost absolute lack of women; then, to procure them, the chief of this colony had had recourse to ruse and violence. After this stratagem had succeeded and the Sabine women had been forced to submit, whether they liked it or not, to the husbands whom chance had given them, all the able-bodied men of Rome did not yet find themselves provided with women, and there is room to suppose that, for two or three centuries, the feminine sex was in a minority in this group of men who had come from all points of Italy, divided as it was arbitrarily into patricians and plebeians, who lived separated from each other. Marriage was, therefore, necessary in order to rally and hold to a common center passions, manners, and interests which were essentially different and disparate; marriage had to be fixed and durable in order to form the social basis of the State; marriage, finally, repressed and condemned every sort of Prostitution, which could not show its head without prejudice. The facts are there to make us understand the necessity of surrounding with the most substantial guarantees the institution of marriage as Romulus had prescribed it to his people. The

four laws which he enacted in favor of the Sabines, and which were engraved on a bronze tablet in the Capitolium, are ample proof that there was, as yet, no need to fear the scourge of Prostitution. The first of these laws declared that women should be the companions of their husbands, and that they should share in the latter's property and honors and in all their prerogatives; the second ordered men to give the right of way to women in public, as a mark of homage; the third prescribed that men should observe modesty in their conversation and actions in the presence of women, to such a point that they were forbidden to appear in the streets of the city except in a long robe, falling to the ankles and covering the whole body; whoever should show himself nude to the eyes of a woman (without doubt, the patrician woman is meant) might be condemned to death; finally, the fourth law specified three cases in which a married woman might be repudiated by her husband: adultery, poisoning of the children, taking away the keys of the house; outside these three cases, the husband was not permitted to repudiate his legitimate wife under pain of losing all his goods, of which the half belonged, then, to his wife and half to the temple of Ceres. Plutarch cites, in addition, two other laws which complemented these, and which bore witness to the precautions that Romulus had taken to protect public manners and render more inviolable the marriage bond. One of these laws placed the adulterous woman at the discretion of her husband, who had the right to punish her as seemed good to him, after having assembled the parents of the guilty one; the other law forbade women to drink wine under pain of being treated as adulteresses. These rigors were by no means adapted to the toleration of legal Prostitution; we must, therefore, recognize the fact, from this austere respect for decorum, that Prostitution did not yet openly exist, however much it may have been practiced in secret beyond the walls of the city, in the surrounding woods. Romulus had no need of closing the gates of his city to corruptions which hid themselves in the shade of forests and in the depths of rural grottoes. His successors, animated by his legis-

lative thought, likewise concerned themselves with purifying manners and sanctifying marriage. Numa Pompilius established a college of Vestals and caused the temple of Vesta to be erected, where the former kept burning the sacred fire as an emblem of chastity. The vestals took a vow to preserve their virginity for thirty years, and those who permitted themselves to break this vow ran the risk of being buried alive; but it was not easy, at least *in flagrante delicto*, to convict them of sacrilege. As to their accomplice, whoever he may have been, he perished under the lashes inflicted upon him by the other vestals, in order to avenge the honor of their companion. In the space of a thousand years, the virginity of the vestals was manifestly violated but eighteen times, or rather, but eighteen victims, convicted of having extinguished the sacred fire of modesty, were buried alive. Numa had desired to change all the Roman women into vestals, for he ordered them by law to wear only long and modest habits, that is to say, ample and flowing, with veils which hid not only the bosom and throat, but even the face. The Roman lady, thus veiled, wrapped in her tunic and her linen mantle, resembled the statue of Vesta come down from its pedestal; her grave and imposing gait inspired only sentiments of veneration, as though she had been the goddess in person; and if the men parted in deference to let her pass, they did not follow her with any but the most chaste glances of admiration. The tragic death of Lucretia, who could not resign herself to go on living after her modesty had been offended, is the most striking proof of the purity of the manners of this period; the entire people would rise up against the author of an offense against the conjugal couch, as a protest in the name of public morality. There are numerous other evidences of the horror and contempt excited by the crime of adultery among the primitive peoples of Italy, whom Greek and Phoenician corruption had, however, already tainted. At Cumae, in the Campania, for example, when a woman had been taken in adultery, she was deprived of her vestments, then led into the forum and exposed naked on a rock, where she received, for a number of hours, the

injuries, railleries and expectorations of the crowd; then she was placed upon an ass and led through the whole town in the midst of whoops. No other chastisement was inflicted upon her, but she remained vowed to infamy; she was pointed out and called *onothatis* (she who has mounted the ass), and this nickname pursued her for the rest of her abject and miserable life.

According to certain commentators, the penalty for adultery, in Latium and the neighboring countries, originally had been more shameless and scandalous than adultery itself. The ass of Cumae also figured in this strange jurisprudence, but the role it played was not limited to serving as a mount to the culprit, but the latter became the public victim of the quadruped's impudicity.

It may be imagined what sarcasms and laughter so monstrous a scene evoked in the gross minds of the spectators. We have here a diversion worthy of the barbaric Fauns and Aborigines, who had first peopled these savage solitudes. The unhappy woman, who had endured the approach of the ass, mangled, trampled and maltreated, was no longer a part of society, except as the latter's slave and plaything, belonging to anyone who wanted to be the ass' successor. We have here truly the first prostitutes who were employed for the general use of the inhabitants of the country. Sometimes, out of decency, the obscene intervention of the ass was dispensed with; sometimes, on the contrary, they preserved an emblem of this animal, which no longer retained the functions of executioner; but nevertheless, we must go back to this ancient origin for that promenade upon an ass which is to be found in the Middle Ages, not only in Italy but in all parts of Europe to which the Roman law had penetrated. The ass represented, evidently, lust in its most brutal acceptation, and to it were given, so to speak, the women who had lost all restraint by committing an adultery or by vowing themselves to public debauchery. It would be impossible to say, in all cases, whether or not the ass displayed intelligence in the punishment which he was charged with inflicting. We may believe, merely,

that, under circumstances sufficiently rare among the ancestors of the Romans, he bore a big bell attached to his long ears so that each of his movements might publish the shame of the condemned one. This bell was also one of the heroic attributes of the ass of Silenus, who, despite the fury of his passions, had merited the good will of Cybele for having saved the honor of this goddess. She was sleeping in an isolated grotto, and the indiscreet Zephyr was amusing himself by lifting up the folds of her veil; Priapus passed by, and he had no sooner seen her than he set about to profit by the occasion; but the ass of Silenus spoiled this fete by beginning to bray. Cybele awoke and barely had time to escape the audacious designs of Priapus. Out of gratitude, she had consecrated to the service of her temple the ass which had given her so timely a warning, and she hung a bell on his ears in memory of the risk she had run; each time she heard the bell ring, she would look about her to assure herself that Priapus was not near. The latter, in revenge, had such a resentment for the ass that nothing could be more agreeable to him than the sacrifice of this animal. Priapus himself, according to a number of poets, had punished the ass by flaying him alive in order to teach him to keep still. It is true this malicious beast had renewed his braying, or had jingled his bell, in a later and analogous situation. Priapus met, in the wood, the nymph Lotis, who was sleeping like Cybele; he was preparing to take advantage of this beautiful prey when the ass began braying and paralyzed his wicked intentions. The nymph showed rancour toward the ass rather than toward Priapus. The Romans, without doubt, had been influenced by the nymph, Lotis, for they had a hatred and almost a horror of the ass, and a mere meeting with one appeared to them an evil augury.

After the ass had been successively deprived of his old prerogatives in the punishment of adulteresses, one could but give him a biped substitute and, sometimes, more than one at once; but the use of the bell was respected as a memento of the ancient penalty. It was undoubtedly custom rather than law which had

established this singular method of punishment for the guilty of low condition; for it would be difficult to suppose the patricians, even to avenge their personal injuries, would have placed themselves at the mercy of plebeian insolence. There were, in various quarters of Rome, those most segregated from the center of the city and probably near the conventicles of Priapus, certain places where adulterous women were received and exposed to the outrages of the first comer. These were a sort of prison, lighted by narrow windows and closed with a strong door; under a low roof, a bed of stone, furnished with straw, waited for the victims, who were forced to enter backward this hole of ignominy; outside, asses' heads, carved in relief on the wall, announced that the ass still presided over the impure mysteries of which this vault was a witness. A bell tower surmounted the dome of this edifice, which was, perhaps, the origin of the pillory of modern times. When a woman had been taken in a flagrant act of adultery, she belonged to the people, whether the husband had abandoned her or the judge had condemned her to public Prostitution. She was carried away in the midst of laughter, insults and the most obscene provocations; no ransom could redeem her; no prayer, no effort could rescue her from this horrible treatment. When she had arrived, half naked, at the theater of her shame, the door would close behind her, and a lottery would then be set up, with dice, or numbered pieces of bone, which assigned to each of the legal executors the turn he was to take in this abominable execution. Each in turn entered the little cell, and at once a throng of curious ones would run to the bars of the windows to enjoy the hideous spectacle, which was proclaimed by the sounding of the bell amid the applause or the hisses of the populace. Each time a new athlete appeared in the arena, laughter and outcries would burst from all sides, and the ringing of the bell would commence again. If we take the word of Socrates the Scholastic, this odious Prostitution was in full force throughout the Roman empire up to the fifth century of the Christian era. The primitive ass no longer existed, except figuratively, in the disorders which accom-

panied the infliction of such a penalty, but the people remembered the ass and tried to bray like him while this infamous debauch was taking place, a debauch which frequently ended in the death of the victim and with the sacrifice of an ass upon the neighboring altar of Priapus. Nevertheless, it is probable that the Romans did not despise, as much as they appeared to do, this animal the name of which, *onos*, designated the worst throw at dice; sometimes, a lover, a young bridegroom, would suspend from the columns of his bed an ass's head and a vine stock in order to celebrate the exploits of an amorous night or as a preparation for those which were projected; the ass bore offerings to the temple of the chaste Vesta; the ass walked proudly in the fetes of Bacchus, and, as a celebrated epigram tells us, if Priapus had taken an aversion to the ass, it was because he was jealous.

If the punishment for adultery was different among the patricians from what it was among the plebeians, it was because marriage also differed in the two classes. Romulus, who was a legislator as sage as he was austere, despite the rape of the Sabines, had desired to make of marriage a patrician institution, so to speak; for he regarded it as indispensable in preserving the families of the hereditary aristocracy. This marriage, the only one with which the legislator was at first concerned, was called *confarreatio*, for the reason that the bridal couple, during the religious ceremonies, were in the habit of sharing a loaf of wheat bread (*panis farreus*), which they ate simultaneously as a sign of union. In order to be admitted to such an alliance, which carried with it the right to various privileges, it was necessary that the couple should first have been recognized as belonging to the patrician class and have been admitted, consequently, to interrogating the auspices, which concerned only the nobility. It was certainly Romulus who established that law which the Decemvirs incorporated, three centuries later, in the laws of the Twelve Tables: "It shall not be permitted to patricians to contract marriages with plebeians." The latter, offended by this exclusion,

protested for a long time before the exclusion had become a part of the civil code. This marriage by confarreation appeared to be the only legitimate, or, at least, the only respectable one, since it placed the woman, in a manner, upon a pedestal of equality with her husband, by making her a participant in all the civil rights which the latter enjoyed, so that this woman, honored with the title of *mother of a family* (*mater familias*), was able to inherit from her husband and from her children. The condition of the mother of a family presented no analogy with the servitude which awaited the plebeian's spouse (*uxor*) under the form of marriage by *coemption* and by *usucapio*. These were the two distinct forms of legal marriage among the plebeians. The word, *coemption*, indicates with sufficient clearness an allusion to a purchase and sale. The woman, in order to be married thus, arrived at the altar with three *as* (a piece of bronze money equivalent to a sou in our currency) in her hand; she would give one to the husband whom she took in the presence of gods and men, but she kept the other two, as though to let it be understood that she was redeeming but a third of her slavery, and that marriage only partly enfranchised her. Other jurists have assumed that, by this symbol of a bargain concluded between the contracting parties, the woman purchased the care and protection of her husband. This marriage was looked upon as being as legitimate for plebeians as that by confarreation was for the patricians, although the *uxor* did not possess the same prerogatives and the same rights as a *mater familias*. As to the third form of marriage, called *usucapio*, this was in reality nothing more than legalized concubinage; for this marriage, it was necessary that the woman, with the consent of her natural guardians, should dwell in a marital state for an entire year without sleeping out of the house more than three nights in succession, with a man whom she had thus taken as a trial husband. This concubine-marriage which was only established at Rome by force of custom, was sanctioned by the law of the Twelve Tables and became a civil institution like the other species of marriage.

The population of Rome, made up of the inhabitants of different countries with different customs, languages and manners, would, no doubt, have been only too much inclined to live without bridle and without law, in the most shameful disorder, if Romulus, Numa and Servius Tullius had not created a legislation in which marriage served as the foundation and support of Roman society. But inasmuch as these kings only concerned themselves with the patricians, the plebeian supplied the silence of the legislator in his regard by making for himself customs which took the place of laws, until these became laws, accepted by the consuls and the Senate. And so, it may be supposed that the marriage of the patricians and the plebeians was preceded by concubinage and by Prostitution, after foreign women had come to seek their fortune in a city where men were in the majority, and after the continual wars of Rome with its neighbors had brought within its walls many women prisoners, who remained as slaves or who became wives. In any case, law and custom equally gave the husband supreme power with respect to his wife; if the latter found her husband in open adultery, she, as Cato remarked, did not dare even to touch him with the end of her finger (*illa te, si adulterares, digito non contingere auderet*), while she might be killed with impunity, if her husband found her in an analogous situation. The plebeians never possessed, in this respect, the benefit of the law; but the patricians, for whom marriage was a very serious thing, often executed justice themselves; they had, it may be seen, other ideas than the people on the question of Prostitution, and it may be concluded that, in the first centuries of Rome, they had lived more chastely and more conjugally than the plebeians, who only married, it may be, to imitate the patricians and to achieve some sort of equality with the latter. The married woman, mother of a family or a wife, had not the right to demand a divorce except on the ground of adultery; but the husband, on the other hand, might obtain a divorce under any one of the three circumstances which Romulus had taken care to distinguish: adultery, poisoning the children, and taking away

the keys of the strong box, as a sign of domestic theft. The woman had, moreover, no more rights over her children than over her husband; but the latter possessed over them the right of life and death and might sell them as many as three times. This power of the father only existed with regard to legitimate children, which is enough to show us that the children who were the issue of Prostitution enjoyed neither the guardianship nor the assistance of the State, but were relegated to the ranks of the vile multitude, along with slaves and actors.

It was not of natural children that Rome had need; she took little account of those poor victims who were unable to name their father and who blushed at the name of their mother; she wished to have citizens, and she demanded them as the result of a regularly contracted marriage. An old law, of which Cicero speaks, forbade a Roman citizen to remain a celibate beyond a certain age, which, in all probability, did not exceed thirty years. When a patrician appeared before the tribunal of the censors, the latter addressed to him this question before any other: "On your soul and conscience, have you a horse? Have you a wife?" Those who were unable to respond in a satisfactory manner were subject to a fine and thrown out of court, until they should have acquired a horse and a wife. The censors, who demanded this double civic status of a patrician, sometimes permitted him to be content with one or the other; for the horse indicated war-like habits, the wife those of a more pacific nature. "I know how to ride a horse," said Bibius Casca, interrogated by a censor who often had reproved him for his obstinate celibacy; "but how could I learn to ride a woman?" . . . "I confess she is a more restive animal," replied the censor, who intended by that, however, merely a joke. "It is marriage which will teach you this sort of equitation." . . . "I shall get married then," replied Casca, "when the Roman people will furnish me the bit and the bride." This censor, who was named Metellus Numiadicus, was not himself any too well convinced of the merits of that marriage which he recommended to others; one day, he began a speech in

the Senate with these words: "Roman knights, if it were possible for us to live without women, we would be able to spare ourselves, and right willingly too, all this foolish trouble; but since Nature has disposed things in such a fashion that we cannot live without them nor live agreeably with them, reason dictates that we should prefer the public interest to our own happiness." The censors, who had jurisdiction over nuptials and marriages, were charged, in the presence of the aediles, with keeping a watch over public Prostitution.

Servius Tullius had ordered each inhabitant of Rome to have inscribed upon the registers of the censors his name, his age, the rank of his father and mother, the names of his wife and children and a census of all his property; whoever dared avoid this registration was subject to being beaten with rods and sold as a slave.

The tables of the censors were preserved in the archives of the republic near the temple of Liberty, on the Aventine. It was by means of these tables, renewed every five years, that the censors were enabled to keep account of the movement and progress of the population; they were enabled, thereby, to judge of the number of births and marriages, but they had no means of determining, otherwise, the progress of Prostitution, since women did not appear before them, being represented only by their fathers, their husbands or their children. There is a great likelihood, therefore, that the prostitutes at first practised their trade freely, beyond reach even of police regulations; for they escaped the necessity of registration, at least for the most part, and they had no need of having their status officially established by the state. It is impossible to say at what period Roman law distinguished for the first time the free woman (*ingenua*) from the prostitute and fixed, in a precise manner, the status of courtezans. There is room to believe that these degraded creatures were, in a manner, beyond the law for a number of centuries, as though legislators did not deign to do them the honor even of naming them; for, if they figure here and there in the history of the republic, they are

not named in the laws up to the reign of Augustus, when the Julian law branded them, and it is not till more than a century after the enactment of this memorable law that the jurisconsult par excellence, Ulpianus, defines Prostitution and its infamous accessories. This definition, although dating from the second century, may be considered, nevertheless, as a resumé of the opinions of all the barristers who had preceded Ulpianus. Here is what the latter gives, under the title *De ritu nuptiarum*, in the twenty-third book of his work: “A woman makes a public commerce of Prostitution, not only when she prostitutes herself in a place of debauchery, but also when she frequents the wine shops or other places in which she does not take the proper care of her honor. 1. By a *public commerce* is to be understood the trade of those women who prostitute themselves to all comers and without choice (*sine delectu*). Thus, this term does not apply to married women who are guilty of adultery, nor to girls who permit themselves to be seduced; by it is meant prostituted women. 2. A woman who has abandoned herself for money to one or two persons is not to be regarded as having made a public commerce of Prostitution. 3. Octavenus holds, with reason, that she who prostitutes herself publicly, even without accepting money, should be included in the number of women who make a public commerce of Prostitution.”

This definition certainly sums up, with a great deal of clearness, the motives of the most ancient Roman laws relative to Prostitution; and while we are not in possession of these laws, it is easy to form an idea of the spirit which dictated them. Prostitution, moreover, was of different sorts and, so to speak, of different degrees, which, undoubtedly, had been distinguished and classified in the codes of jurisprudence. Thus, *quaestus* represented the wandering prostitute who solicited her trade. *Scortatio* represented stationary prostitution, which waited for its clientele and received it at a fixed place. As to the act of Prostitution itself, it was adultery with a married woman; *stuprum* was the commission of the act with a respectable woman, who, as a

result, was degraded. *Fornicatio* was the commission of the act with an immodest woman, who suffered no prejudice as a result. There was, besides, the *lenocinium*, that is to say, the more or less direct traffic in Prostitution, the more or less complacent mediation of brazen and of unblushing speculators; in a word, the assistance and provocation of all sorts of debauchery. This was one of the most contemptible forms of Prostitution, and the barrister did not hesitate to describe as *prostitutes* those vile and abject creatures who made a trade of exciting and inciting to Prostitution, by means of evil counsel or perfidious seductions, the blind and imprudent victims whose shame and dishonor they exploited at half rate. The law confounded in the same contempt the men and the women, *lenae*, *lenones*, who gave themselves to these scandalous negotiations; but the law did not interfere with their industry by thus assimilating them with the men and women who trafficked in their bodies. In the class *de meretricibus*, were included not only the male and female entrepreneurs, who kept open house to debauchery, and who took a toll from the Prostitution which they favored, either by giving their slaves to it or by luring into it persons of free condition (*ingenuae*); but also the hostlers, the wine-shop proprietors and the bathhouse keepers, who had domestics of either sex at their service, and who devoted these domestics to public debauchery, the master of the place seeing to it that Prostitution redounded to his own profit, becoming thus an accomplice, whatever his ostensible profession might otherwise be, and incurring the full burden of infamy the same as the miserable objects of his commerce.

The brand of infamy, which was borne in common by all the agents and intermediaries of Prostitution, along with condemned men, slaves, gladiators and actors, brought civil death to those whom it touched by the sole fact of their profession; these did not enjoy the possession of their goods; they were not able to testify or to inherit; they were deprived of the guardianship of their children, they might not occupy any public position, they were not even permitted to make an accusation in court, to give testi-

mony or to take an oath before any tribunal whatever; they were only permitted, out of tolerance, to show themselves at the solemn fêtes of the great gods; they were exposed to all insults, to every variety of ill treatment, without being authorized to defend themselves or even to make a complaint; in short, the magistrates possessed, very nearly, the right of life and death over these infamous wretches. Whoever was once branded with infamy was never able to wash himself clean of this indelible stain; "for," said the law, "turpitude is not abolished by remission." The law accepted no excuse which might free from this social degradation the man or the woman who had merited it. Clandestine Prostitution was, no more than public Prostitution, sheltered by ignominy; poverty and necessity were not even an excuse in the eyes of the law, which was satisfied with the fact, without taking into account motives and circumstances. The fact alone constituted infamy, for there was always a sufficient reason for seeking proof and establishment of the fact, even in a very distant past. Thus, there was no mitigating circumstance which might be invoked against the fact that implied infamy. Once infamy had existed, no matter when or in what place, it still existed, it would always exist; nothing could efface it, nothing could attenuate it. A slave, who had boarded girls, and who had grown rich from the fruits of their Prostitution, kept, even after his enfranchisement, the brand of infamy. Ulpianus and Pomponius cite this remarkable example of the weakness of infamy in the face of Roman jurisprudence. But, on the other hand, the girls who had been prostituted by this slave, and for his profit, during their servitude, were not branded with infamy, despite the trade which they had practised, on the ground that they had been constrained and forced to do so. It is the Emperor Septimus Severus, who formulates this ruling, reported by Ulpianus. Nevertheless, especially under the emperors, the brand of infamy did not restrain women of free condition, and even of noble extraction, from devoting themselves to Prostitution, with

the authorization of the aediles, called, in this case, *licentia stupri*, or the brevet of debauchery.

The laws of the emperors had, then, for object, the prevention of Prostitution from spreading and taking root among the patrician classes. Augustus, Tiberius, Domitian himself were equally jealous in preserving intact the honor of the Roman blood and in protecting, by means of rigid proscriptions, the integrity and the sanctity of marriage, which they regarded as a fundamental law of the republic. They were not scrupulous, otherwise, in themselves conforming to the legal rules which they imposed on the public. In all this body of jurisprudence, so complex and so minute, against adultery, Prostitution is incessantly placed on trial, and constantly with an excessive rigor which is evidence of the effort of the legislators to repress it, even when the emperor was himself giving an example of all the vices and all the infamies. The Julian law prescribed that a senator, his son, or his grandson should not be betrothed to or espouse, openly or fraudulently, a woman whose father or whose mother was, or had been, a comedian, a meretrice or a panderer; similarly, he whose father or mother had carried on the same infamous trade could not be betrothed to, or wed, the daughter or granddaughter or great-granddaughter of a senator. But since those persons whom the law declared infamous would sometimes seek to reestablish their status by invoking the name and noble birth of their parents, a decree of the Senate absolutely forbade Prostitution to women whose father, grandfather or husband belonged, or had belonged, to the order of Roman knights. Tiberius sanctions this decree by exiling a number of Roman ladies, among others Vestilia, daughter of a senator, who had devoted themselves, out of libertinism rather than from avarice, to the service of popular Prostitution. Many patrician and plebeian women, in order to escape the terrible consequences of the law against adultery, had sought a refuge which they believed to be inviolable in the name of Prostitution; for in the times of the republic, it was sufficient for a matron to declare herself a courtezan (*meretrice*), and to

cause herself to be so described on the registers of the aediles, in order to place herself beyond the law pertaining to adulteresses. But new measures were taken to stop this scandal and to annul its pernicious effects; the Senate declared that every matron who had carried on an infamous trade, in the character of a comedian, a courtezan or a procuress, in order to escape chastisement as an adulteress, should be, nevertheless, pursued and condemned by virtue of senatorial decree. The husband was invited to pursue his adulterous wife even into the bosom of Prostitution and infamy; all those who had lent a hand wittingly to this Prostitution, the proprietor of the house in which it had taken place, the lenon who had profited by it, the husband himself who had taken pay for the dishonor done him, all might equally be pursued and punished as adulterers. What was more, the proprietor or tenant of a bath, of a wine shop, or even of a field in which the crime had been committed, would find himself accused of complicity; even if the crime had not been committed on those premises, one might still hunt down, with the same rigor, the persons judged to have arranged, winked at and facilitated the adultery, by furnishing the guilty parties not only a place, but also the means of meeting for illicit interviews. The magistrates pushed as far as possible the application of the law, as though to provide a contrast to the outburst of adulteries and crimes which was dragging the Roman Empire to its ruin. Women were to be seen, adulteresses in the intervals of a first marriage, remarrying again, meeting suddenly with an accuser who came, in the name of a dead husband, to dishonor and punish them in the arms of their new spouse. It was only the widow, even though she was the mother of a family, who might give herself with impunity to Prostitution, without fearing any persecution, even on the part of her children.

Jurisprudence, it may be seen, did not concern itself with Prostitution, except from the point of view of adultery and in the interests of marriage; it left, otherwise, to police regulation, embodying the decision of the censors and the aediles, the govern-

ment of courtezans and those depraved beings who lived at their expense. It was, particularly, the Prostitution of married women and the odious *lenocinium* of husbands which the Senate and the emperors endeavored to combat and to suppress. The law, in the first place, imposed an equal restraint on women of all conditions, provided they had not been infamous; but later it was restricted to matrons and to mothers of families, after adultery, in most of the patrician houses, had been peacefully established under the auspices of the husband, who unworthily exploited the modesty of his wife. The institution of marriage, which legislation was designed to safeguard, was more than ever compromised as the result of the turpitudes which were unveiled in the process of justice. At times, the woman shared with her husband the price gained by her adultery; at other times, the husband insisted on being paid for winking at the adultery of his wife; almost always, the peril of adultery added one more attraction to Prostitution. But if the man who had permitted an act of adultery was able to prove that he did not know in advance he was having an affair with a married woman, he was dismissed from court, as though his advances had been made to a simple meretrix. Care was taken, on one side and the other, to arrange for certain subterfuges and to be on guard against the rigors of the law. As a consequence, matrons in search of adventure dressed themselves as slave girls and even as prostitutes; thus disguised, they made advances in the street to passers-by whom they did not know, or placed themselves in the path of their lovers whom they pretended to have met by chance. Thanks to their disguise, which exposed them to free speech, to impudent glances and sometimes even to daring caresses on the part of the first comer, they might seek their fortune in the promenades, in the suburbs and along the Tiber, without compromising anyone, either their husbands or their lovers. But by showing themselves in other garb than that of a matron, they abandoned all claim to pity for the injuries which they might receive as a result of their slave or prostitute's costume. For there was a very severe penalty against

those who annoyed a woman or a girl clad as a matron or a virgin, whether the annoyance was by indecent gestures, by obscene remarks or by a silent pursuit. The law only accorded protection to respectable women and did not suppose that the modesty of prostitutes had any need of being protected against affronts which courtezans ordinarily sought for, in place of repelling.

The rigor of the law, with its penalties against adultery, did not render the latter less frequent or more secret; but marriage, surrounded thus with perils and suspicions, could only appear more redoubtable and less attractive. There was visible a considerable diminution in the number of unions, approved and legally recognized, all the more because of the fact that consanguinity, even in remote degrees, created certain obstacles which might, when the marriage had been accomplished, provide permanent causes of divorce. It was then that the patricians, who had no desire to expose themselves to these annoyances and dangers, made use, for their own convenience, of marriage under the form of *usucapio*, which had not been in vogue up to that time except among the lower classes; the patricians changed it somewhat in order to make of it a *concubinage*, which a law, as vague as the condition itself, admitted and recognized as an institution. It was no longer necessary, as in the *usucapio*, for the woman to cohabit under the same roof for a year in order to have the marriage pronounced definitive; concubinage could not achieve that result in any case, for it was not formed, but only existed by the will of the two parties; it had, moreover, no particular manifestation, no general character, except that a woman known as *ingenua* and *honesta*, or of patrician blood, might not become a concubine, and that consanguinity was an obstacle to concubinage, as it was to marriage. A man who had been legitimately married, whether or not he was separated from his wife, found himself, by that fact alone, unfitted to contract a liaison with a concubine; and in any case, the celibate or the widower was not authorized to take two concubines at the same time. As to changing them, he was always free to do that, but only by advising the

magistrate before whom he had declared his intention of living in concubinage. It was thus, in a manner, a semimarriage, a temporary contract, subject to the fancy of one of the contracting parties. At the beginning of concubinage, the concubine had the right to almost the same regard as the legitimate bride; she was even given the title of matron, at least in certain circumstances, and the Julian law punished an outrage done to a concubine as gravely as if it concerned an *ingenua*, or a girl of free condition, even though this concubine was a slave by birth; but as a result of the corruption of manners, concubinage multiplied in a disquieting manner, and it became necessary for the laws to impose rules and limitations on it; concubines were then shorn of the legal protection which they had at first enjoyed, and the Emperor Aurelian ordered that they only be taken from among slaves or freed women. From this moment, concubinage became no more than a domestic Prostitution, dependent only on the caprice of the man and offering not the least guaranty to the woman. At all times, the children born of a concubine remained none the less fitted for legitimization, whereas those born of Prostitution, properly so called, or of a passing intercourse, the ones known as *spurci* or *quaesiti*, as well as those born of a prohibited union, were never favored with a legitimization which effaced the stain of their origin.

Legal Prostitution, under all its forms and under all its names (it was the same with concubines), was, then tolerated at Rome and in the Roman Empire provided it submitted to the various regulations of the urban police, and, above all, to the payment of the proportional duty (*vectigal*) which it owed the State. But it is probable that, apart from these regulations and this tax, the old Roman legislation did not deign to interest itself in that infamous population which lived by public debauchery and which satisfied the public's shameful needs. A curious fact proves the indifference and the disdain of the legislator and the magistrate for all these miserable agents of Prostitution. Quintus Caecilius Metellus Celer, who was consul sixty years before Christ, re-

fused, during his tenure of office, to recognize the rights of succession which had been invoked by one Vetibius, branded with infamy as a lenon; the praetor explained his refusal by saying that the lupanar had nothing in common with the civic fireside, and that the unfortunate ones whom the practice of *lenocinium* had stigmatized were unworthy of the protection of the laws (*legum auxilio indignos*). One might, also, in the very explicit passage of the plea of Cicero for Caelius, find proof of the absolute tolerance which had grown up around the practice of Prostitution: "To forbid youth all love of courtezans would be in accordance with the principles of a severe virtue, I cannot deny; but these principles are little in accord with the relaxation of morals in this century, or even with the tolerant customs of our ancestors; for in short, when have such passions as these not held sway? when have they been forbidden? when have they not been tolerated? and when has it happened that that which is permitted was not done?" It may be seen, thus, that Prostitution was permitted; the civil law did not prohibit it except in certain exceptional cases, thus limiting itself to preventing its abuse; it was only public morality and philosophy which were charged with correcting manners and stopping debauchery. But as Cicero gives us to understand, philosophy and public morality were equally indulgent toward bad habits rendered almost respectable by their ancient origin. The Romans of all periods were too jealous of their liberty to submit to any restraints or contradictions in the individual employment of that liberty; they, in a manner and in their own eyes, justified Prostitution, of which they made a large use; they merely demanded that the prostitutes should be slaves or freed women, for the reason that they considered prostitution a degrading form of slavery. That is why men and the women free by birth lost this sacred character in the eyes of the law as soon as they had placed themselves in any manner at the service of Prostitution.

If the Romans tolerated so complacently the natural intercourse of the two sexes, they did not, therefore, impede that in-

tercourse against nature which the Fauns of Latium would have invented, if it had not been, from the first centuries widespread and authorized throughout the world. This shameful depravation, which the civil and religious laws of antiquity, with the exception of those of Moses, had not even thought of combatting, was never more general than in the best period of Roman civilization. It was, in the eyes of the legislator, a tolerated form of Prostitution or of slavery; the men known as *ingenui* or free born, were not, therefore, to submit to it; as to slaves, freed men and foreigners, they might dispose of themselves, by rent or sale, without the law taking any cognizance of the conditions; as to citizens, or the *ingenui*, they purchased or hired at pleasure what seemed good to them without the nature of the bargain being subject to legal inquiry; the ones acted as free men, the others as slaves; the latter endured Prostitution, the former imposed it. But among free men, things were otherwise, and the law, guardian of the liberty of all, sometimes intervened to punish an affront to the liberty of a citizen. Such was, at any rate, the legal fiction; in this circumstance alone, a citizen had no right to alienate his own liberty by submitting himself to an act which was an outrage to that liberty. Thus, in the fifth century of the founding of Rome, L. Papyrius, taken in a flagrant dereliction with the young Publius, was condemned to prison and a fine for not having respected the character and the person of an *ingenuus*; a short while afterward, the same C. Publius was punished in his turn for a similar offense. The people did not suffer citizens to conduct themselves as slaves. Loetorius Mergus, a military tribune, brought before the assembly of the people for having been taken with one of the *cornicularii*, or brigadiers of his legion, was unanimously condemned to prison. The violation of a man was looked upon as even more culpable than that of a woman, because there was thought to be in it more of violence and perversity; but this species of rape did not carry with it the penalty of death, unless it had been committed upon a free man. A centurion named Cornelius, perpetrator of a rape of

this nature, was executed in the presence of the army. This penalty was not, however, applied by virtue of a special law until near the time of the second Punic war, when a certain Caius Scantinius was accused by C. Metellus of having attempted to commit rape on the patrician's son. The senate then promulgated a law against pederasts, under the name of the *lex scantinia*; but there was no question, so far as this law was concerned, except of affronts committed against free men, and no other restraints were placed on this species of Prostitution, which remained the appenage of slaves and freed men.

Such was, among the Romans, the only jurisprudence to which Prostitution had given girth, up to the time when Christian morality introduced a new legislation into paganism, clearing and purifying the latter. Under the sway of pagan ideas, Prostitution had existed in a state of tolerance, and the law did not even deign to lift the veil which concealed it from the eyes of the public conscience; but as soon as the Gospel had commenced the reform of manners, the Christian legislator recognized the right of repressing legal Prostitution.



## CHAPTER XVI.

PUBLIC women at Rome, at least in the Rome which had been corrupted and softened by the importation of manners from Greece and Asia, were more numerous than they had ever been at Athens or even at Corinth; they were also divided into a number of classes, which had nothing in common except the one object of their shameful commerce; but among these different classes of courtezans, who had come from all the different countries in the world, one might have sought in vain for those queens of Prostitution, those hetairai, as remarkable for their minds and education as for their beauty and their graces, those philosophs, formed in the schools of Sophocles and of Epicurus, those Aspasiae, those Leontiums, who had, in a manner, rehabilitated and illuminated Greek hetairism. The Romans were more material, if not more sensual than the Greeks; they were not content with the refinements and delicacies of an elegant pleasure; they did not nourish their hearts with the illusion of Platonic love; they would have blushed to hitch themselves to the literary chariot of a female philosoph or a muse; they would not have deigned to seek with a woman of pleasure the chaste distractions of intellectual conversation. For them, pleasure consisted in the grossest acts, and since they were naturally of an ardent nature, a lubricious imagination and a Herculean force, they demanded nothing except real pleasures, often repeated, greatly glutted and monstrously varied. This temperament, indicated by the thickness of their necks, which were like those of bulls, found itself served at will by a throng of mercenaries of either sex, who bore names peculiar to their habits, their costumes, their retreats and the details of their profession.

All the women who made a traffic of their bodies at Rome might be put into two essentially distinct classes, the whores

(*meretrices*) and the prostitutes (*prostibulae*).<sup>\*</sup> By *meretrices* was meant those who did not work except at night; by *prostibulae* those who gave night and day to their infamous labor. Nonius Marcellus, a grammarian of the third century, in his book on the *Differences in the Signification of Words*, established this distinction, which was to the advantage of the *meretrices*: "The difference must be remarked between a whore and a prostitute that the former practises her profession in a more decent manner, for the *meretrices* are so named from the word *merenda* (evening meal), because they do not dispose of themselves except at night. The *prostibula* draws her name from the fact that she stands in front of her *stabulum* (resort) in order to carry on her commerce by night and by day." Plautus, in his comedy of the *Cistellaria*, establishes this distinction very clearly: "I go to the house of a good *meretrix*; for to stand in the streets is the act of a prostitute." We may think that these two kinds of public women, those who only were so at night and those who were so at every hour of the night and day, must have possessed still other notable differences in their manner of life, in their clothes and even in their social condition; thus, the Latin writers who make mention of the registers on which the aediles inscribed the name of courtezans, speak only of *meretrices* and seem designedly to have failed to mention the *prostibulae*. The latter, as a matter of fact, occupied a fixed domicile and merely had to change their name and costume, since they belonged to the lowest class of plebeians. The *meretrices*, on the contrary, practised as honorably as possible their indecent commerce and did not put themselves in opposition to the regulations of the police; they might, moreover, live as good women, *sub sole*, until the hour when, covered by the protecting shadows of night, they went to the luponars, which they did not quit until the first streaks of dawn. It is probable also that the good *meretrix*, as Plautus calls her, with a naïveté

\*A distinction that is rather difficult to bring out in English. My friend, Mr. Nicolson, however, calls my attention to a report of the Chicago Vice Commission of some years ago, in which a distinction was made between out-and-out prostitutes and the clandestine variety (shop-girls, etc.).

which the learned M. Naudet has been careful to preserve in his translation, paid very exactly her tax to the republic and did not endeavor, by disguising her profession, to filch a single denier from the State. But all the workers in Prostitution were not so conscientious, and it may be supposed that the greater number, the poorest, the most abject, made no scruple of avoiding registration with the aedile and, as a consequence, the payment of an immodesty tax. These unfortunate ones, the fact is, the same as the prostitutes of the lowest order, did not earn enough for themselves to be able to save the least part of their gain for the public treasury.

The *alicariae*, or bakers, were women of the street who waited for fortune at the doors of bakeries, especially those which sold certain cakes, made of fine flour, without salt or leaven, and destined for offerings to Venus, Isis, Priapus and the other gods and goddesses. These breads, called *coliphia* and *silihones*, represented, under the most capricious forms, the nature of the woman and that of the man. Since there was an enormous consumption of these Priapic and venereal breads, especially on the occasions of certain fetes, the master bakers erected tents and opened shops in the public places and on the street corners; they sold nothing but sacrificial breads; but at the same time, they had slave girls or servant maids, who prostituted themselves day and night in the bakery. Plautus, in his *Poenulus*, has not forgotten these good friends of the journeymen: *Prosedas, pistorum amicas, reliquias alicarias*. The *bliteae* or *blitidae* were women of the vilest sort, who had been so brutalized by wine and debauchery that they were no longer worth anything for the trade which they still plied amid the fields; their name was derived from *blitum*, *blite*, a species of white beet, insipid and nauseous. Suidas does not depart from this etymology in saying: "They give the name of *blitidae* to those vile, abject, and idiotic women." (*Viles, abjetas, fatuasque mulieres, vocabant blitidas.*) According to other philologists, this nickname was applied to courtezans in general for the reason that they frequently wore green slippers of the

color of smallage. It was a serious insult to refer to a decent woman as a blitum. The *bustuariae* were women of the cemeteries; they wandered day and night among the tombs (*busta*) and the pyres; they sometimes acted as mourners for the dead and they especially provided recreation for the *bustuarii* who prepared the pyres and burned the bodies; for the grave diggers who dug the graves and the *colombarii* who guarded the sepulchres; they had no other bed than the lawn which surrounded the funereal monuments, no other bed curtain than the shadow of these monuments, no other Venus than Proserpine. The *casa-lides*, or *casorides*, or *casoritae*, were prostitutes who dwelt in the little houses (*casae*) from which they had taken their nickname; this name signified also the same thing in Greek, *Rasaura* or *Rasoris*. The *copae* or *wine-shop girls* were women of the taverns and the hostleries; they were not always seated at the entrance of their ordinary dwelling; sometimes, they poured wine for passers-by who stopped to refresh themselves; sometimes they showed themselves at the windows to attract clients; sometimes they made the latter a sign to enter; sometimes they remained in retirement in a low and secluded room. The *diobolares* or the *diobolae* were miserable women, most of them old, emaciated and bent, who never asked more than two oboles, as their name indicated. Plautus, in his *Poenulus*, says that the Prostitution of the *diobolares* was confined to the lowest slaves and the vilest men (*servorum sordidulorum scorta diobolaria*). Pacuvius describes this Prostitution by saying that the *diobolares* had no refusal to make the one who offered them the smallest piece of money (*nummi caussa parvi*). The *forariae*, or *foreign women*, were those who came from the country to prostitute themselves in the city, and who, with dusty feet and dirty tunics, wandered in the dark and tortuous streets to gain a feeble livelihood. The *gallinae* or *chickens* were those who went everywhere to roost, and who carried away everything they could lay their hands on: bedclothing, lamps, vases, and even household goods.

Among the more distinguished class of courtezans, the *delicatae*, or, to employ the French word, *mignonnes*, were those who frequented the Roman knights, the perfumed small gentry and the rich of all conditions; they did not pride themselves, however, on their delicacy in the matter of money, and they never found that this latter smelled of the freed man, the adulterer or the informer; they were not difficult to deal with, except for those who came without well-filled purses. Flavia Domitilla, whom the Emperor Vespasian married, and who was the mother of Titus, had been a delicata before being empress. The *famosae*, or the *famous ones*, were courtezans of good will who, although patrician women, mothers of families and matrons, had no shame in prostituting themselves in the lupanars: \* some, in order to satisfy a horrible lust, others, for purposes of an ignoble gain, which they dispensed in sacrifices to the divinities of their affection. The *junices*, or *heifers*, and the *juvencae*, or *cows*, were those who owed their nicknames to their embonpoint, to their facility and to the amplitude of their throat. The *lupae* or *wolves*, the *lupanae* or *wood-runners*, had been so named in memory of the nurse of Remus and Romulus, Acca Laurentia; like this wife of the shepherd Faustulus, they walked by night in the fields and woods, imitating the cry of a famished wolf in order to summon the prey for which they laid in wait. This nickname had been borne in the same sense by the dicteriades of the Ceramicus at Athens. It was afterward naturalized at Rome and became the generic designation of all courtezans. "I believe," says Ausonius, in one of his epigrams, "I believe her father is uncertain, but her mother is truly a wolf." The *noctilucae* were also night-walkers; as in the case of the *noctuvigilae*, or night-watchers, the nickname had been given to Venus by the poets, who thought thereby to honor the goddess. The daughters of the night were also called by the general name of *nonariae*, for the reason that the lupanars did not open till the ninth hour and the wolves did not begin their course till that hour. Those of the lowest class

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\*Treated as an English word throughout.

were called *pedaneae*, for the reason that they did not spare their shoesoles when they had any. The *walkers* did not possess those little feet of which the Romans were so fond, and which Ovid never fails, in his mythological descriptions, to attribute to the goddesses.

The *dores* owed their nickname to their costume, or rather to their nudity; for they showed themselves absolutely naked, like the nymphs of the sea, among whom mythology had described Doris, their mother, by giving her the most voluptuous and well-rounded forms. Juvenal cries out against these dores or dorides, "who," he says, "like a vile actor depicting a wise matron, despoil themselves of all vestments in order to represent goddesses." The public women were designated by still other names, which they embraced with equal indifference: *mulieres*, or women; *pallaceae*, from the Greek *pallace*; *pellices*, in memory of the Bacchantes who had tiger-skin tunics; or *prosedae*, those who waited seated for someone to approach them. They were also called *peregrinae*, or *foreign women*, the name constantly given them in the Hebrew books, for the reason that the majority had come from all points of the universe to sell themselves at Rome. Many had been brought there as prisoners of war after each conquest of the Roman eagle; many belonged to the ranks of the procurresses and the lenons, who had bought them and who exploited their labor. The Romans, before they had become wholly corrupted, prided themselves on the fact that only foreign women were to be seen among the sorrowful victims of their debauchery; these creatures bore also a name which has been preserved, in a manner, in our popular speech: *putae* or *puti* or *putilli*, either because this name recalled that of the goddess Potua, who presided over that which was possible; or because it was derived from *potus*, by allusion to the amorous philtre which was drunk in their chalice; because it was a description of *pures* (*putae* for *purae*), by antiphrasis; or finally, because it was intended to disguise an obscene image, *putei* having been contracted into *puti*, preserving for the word the sense of *well* or *cistern*. Whatever was the

origin of the word, lovers made use of it, at first, in order to pay a compliment to their mistresses. Plautus, in his *Asinaria*, puts on the stage a lover who employs this epithet, along with others drawn from natural history: "Tell me, then, my little duck, my dove, my cat, my swallow, my crow, my sparrow my well of love!" The expression *cuadrantariae* was only employed as a sign of contempt and applied to the lowest prostitutes; it referred to the miserable wages with which these latter were content; the *quadrans* was the fourth part of the Roman *as*, and this small bronze piece, which was equivalent to twenty centimes in our money, was the fee ordinarily given the rubber in the public baths. Cicero, in his plea for Caelius, says that the *quadrantaria*, at least when she was not a mistress, belonged by right to the rubber. Cicero was making, perhaps, a malicious allusion to the sister of Claudius, his enemy, whom he had nicknamed *quadrans*, for the reason that, while playing with her when they were young, he had amused himself by tossing her *quadrans*, which she received in her robe, and which sometimes reached the end which Cicero had seen. All the public women were *quaestuariae* and *quaestuosae*, for the reason that they carried on a traffic in money (*quaestus*), with their bodies. Under the reign of Trajan, a census was taken of the *quaesturariae* who served the pleasures of Rome, and 32,000 of them were counted. Plautus, in his *Miles*, defines the *quaestuosa*: "A woman who gives her body as pasture to another body (*quae alat corpus corpore*)."<sup>1</sup> The *quaestuariae* were poor servants, who escaped for a few moments, with a basket containing their daily tasks, and who went to prostitute themselves for a few deniers, after which they would return to the house and resume spinning the wool. *Vagae* were the wandering women; *ambulatrices* were the walkers; *scorta* were prostitutes of the vilest sort, *skins*, as this insulting word must be translated; as to the *scorta devia*, they waited at their homes for customers and merely put themselves at the window to draw trade. All were equally insulted by the terms *scrantiae*, *scrap-*

*tae* or *scratiae*, which we are forced to translate as *pots de chambre* or *chairs with holes*.

These were not the only descriptions which the courtezans of Rome had to endure in good or bad part, in addition to the two principal classifications, which divided them into meretrices and prostitutes; they were also called *suburranae*, or women of the suburbs, for the reason that the Subura, a suburb of Rome near the Via Sacra, was only inhabited by thieves and fallen women. One of the *Priapeia* cites, among the young suburranae who had won their freedom with the product of their trade (*de quaestu libera facta suo est*) the beautiful Telethuse, whom Prostitution had enriched while making her ugly. The *summoenianae* were likewise women of the suburbs, who peopled the deserted streets of the Summoenium, near the walls of the city, where were located the lupanars or the caves which took their place. "Whoever will be the guest of Zoilus," says an epigram of Martial, "must sup between two matronly summoenianae!" Martial, in another epigram, however, seems to wish to render justice to the decency of these women: "The courtezan," he says, "hides herself from the gaze of the curious by drawing bolt and curtain; rarely does the Summoenium offer an open door." Finally, the *schoeniculae*, who haunted the same segregated quarters, and who sold their caresses to soldiers and slaves, wore girdles of rushes or straw (*skoinos*) in order to announce that they were always for sale. One commentator has made learned researches which tend to prove that these women of the slaves and soldiers wore their girdle as high as possible (*alticinctae*), in order to be less disturbed in the practise of their profession. Another commentator, a learned Hebraist, would see in the schoeniculae of the Romans those Babylonian prostitutes whom we see, in Baruch and the Jewish prophets, bound with cords and seated beside the road, burning incense. Still another commentator, who relies upon citations from Festus, maintains that these women of low degree owed their nicknames to the gross perfumes with which they sprinkled their bodies, "*schoeno delibutas*," as Plautus says.

The *naniae* were dwarfs or children, who had been trained from the age of six years for their infamous trade. The *slugs* (this nickname has been preserved in almost all languages) possessed more than one analogy with the viscous and driveling mollusc, which is to be found in damp places, and which leaves its slimy traces wherever it has passed, feeding on fruits and herbs. The *circulatrices* included all the vagabond women. The title of *Charybdes*, or *gulfs*, was naturally applied to those who swallowed up the health, money and honor of youth. The *pretiosae*, who sold their favors dearly, at least did no harm except to the purse of their customers. Courtezans of the people or of the nobility, meretrices or prostitutes, all wore the garment of their class, that is to say, the toga or short tunic, and all had a right to the name of *togatae*, a shameful description for them, whereas the Roman men were honored by the name of *togati* (citizens in toga). Finally, to bring to an end this nomenclature of Roman Prostitution, one should not forget to remark that the public women, being often collected in the same places, their assemblages were called *conciones meretricum* and *senacula*, sometimes even the *senatus mulierum*, or senate of women, whether these unions took place in the street, in the taverns or in the bakery shops. The high-toned courtezans had, also, their places of asylum at Baiae, at Clusium, at Capua and in the different cities where they went to take the waters and to recover from their labors; sometimes, they went in so great numbers to the baths of Clusium that the remark was made: "There is a herd of the beasts of Clusium! (*Clusinum pecus*)", whenever four or five were gathered together to laugh and provoke gallant remarks.

It is unpleasant to learn that the majority of these distinctive appellations, applied to the public women, were equally applied to men, to slaves and, above all, to children, who took an infamous part in the unbridled debauchery of the Romans. Masculine Prostitution was certainly more ardent, more general, at Rome than feminine Prostitution; but we have not the courage to descend into these mysterious and infected depravities, and we

find ourselves lacking in heart as we approach a subject brazenly treated in the poems of Horace, Catullus, Martial and even Virgil;\* we scarcely dare do more than enumerate the odious cohort of agents and auxiliaries to these abominable manners. For each class of female prostitutes there was a corresponding class of male prostitutes, there being no difference between the two classes save that of sex. The Latin language had, so to speak, augmented its riches in the creation of words to describe these specialties of vice. These infamous ones were not even branded by the law, since the police regulation did not assign them any special garb, and the aedile did not inscribe them in his records of Prostitution. They were left, in their turpitude, a liberty which bore witness to the indulgence and even to the favor which legislation accorded them, so long as they were not free-born Roman citizens. They were, ordinarily, the children of slaves, who had been instructed from an early age to endure the stains of an obscene commerce. "They call *children for rent* (*pueri meritorii*) those who, by their own will or from force, lend themselves to the shameful passions of their master." Such is the definition furnished us by one of Juvenal's ancient commentators. In his satires, this great poet, who has branded with a red iron the ignomnies of his times, returns on every page to that disgusting use to which these unfortunate children were condemned from birth, an ignoble yoke which they accepted without complaint. They were called *pathici* (patients), *ephebi* (adolescents), *gemelli* (twins), *catamiti* (hypocrites), *amasii* (lovers), etc. It would be too long and too fastidious a task to pass in review this vile litany of figurative or significant names which, in the corruption of Roman manners, had been created to depict the incredible variety of these sad instruments of Prostitution. It will suffice to say that the adolescents, trained to this abominable art from their seventh year, had to meet certain demands of physical beauty, bordering on that of the feminine sex; they were beardless and without bodily hair, anointed with perfumed oils, with long

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\*For an example from the chaste Virgil, see his *Corydon* (*Eclogue II.*)

curled locks, a brazen manner, oblique glances, lascivious gestures, a nonchalant gait and obscene movements. All these vile servants of pleasure found themselves ranged under two categories which, in general, did not encroach upon their special attributes; there were those who were never more than passive and docile victims; and there were those who became, in their turn, active, and who might at need render immodesty for immodesty to their debauched Maecenases. These last, whose good offices the Roman ladies did not disdain, were ordinarily eunuchs (*Spadones*), who, though castrated, still preserved the sign of virility. Others had been submitted to a complete castration, which made of them a bastard race, with something of the character at once of the man and of the woman. This was a refinement of which the *paedicones* (pederasts) were very fond and jealous. For the rest, in order to understand the incredible prevalence of these whores among the Romans, we must remember that they demanded of the masculine sex all the pleasures which the feminine could give them and a few others, still more extraordinary, which the latter sex, destined by nature for purposes of love, would have found it hard to procure for them. Each citizen, no matter how commendable his character or how elevated his social position, had, then, in his house a seraglio of young slaves, under the eyes of his family, of his wife and children. Rome, moreover, was filled with lads who hired themselves out the same as the public women, with houses devoted to this species of Prostitution and with panderers who had no other trade than that of making profit out of the hideous complacencies of a throng of slaves and freed men.

If libertinism of this sort had no more clever interpreters than certain dancers and mimes called *cinaedi* (from the Greek verb, *kinein*, to move), who were almost all eunuchs, it was also among the class of female dancers and mountebanks that the best subjects might be recruited for the pantomimic sports of love. The flute players and dancers were as sought after at Rome as they had been in Greece and Asia; they were brought from these coun-

tries, where they had a perpetual school to train them in the lessons of the art of pleasure. They were not officially devoted to Prostitution; their names were not to be read in the aedile's books, at least not in the vast repertory of courtezans; they commended themselves solely by the trade which belonged to them, and which they practised, moreover, with a sort of emulation; but they were not deprived of other resources which this trade permitted them to make use of at the same time. They did not differ, therefore, from the public women, properly so-called, except in the liberty which they enjoyed in not making Prostitution their principal industry; they dealt, moreover, only with the rich, and they hired themselves out, by the hour or by the night, to play the flute, to dance or to mimic at the feasts, in the assemblages and at the orgies. These women of joy differed from one another, not only in their figures, their faces, their complexions, their language, but also by the character of their dancing and their music. Among them were distinguished the Spaniards, (*gaditanae*), who knew marvelously how to excite, by their songs and dances, the lust and desires of the most frigid spectators. "Young and lubricious daughters of Cadiz endlessly shake their lascivious loins to skillful vibrations." It is Martial who thus depicts their national dances, and Juvenal adds one more trait by saying that the Gaditanae crouched even to the earth in shaking their haunches (*ad terram tremulo descendant clune puellae*); a powerful aphrodisiac, according to him, an ardent spur to the most languishing senses.\* All the dancers did not come from Spain: Ionia, the Isle of Lesbos and Syria had lost nothing of their ancient privileges when it came to furnishing debauchery with women the best trained in the art of the flute and that of the dance. Those who were called, without distinction, *dancers*, *fluters*, *players of the lyre* (*saltatrices*, *fidicinae*, *tibicinae*) were Lesbian, Syrian or Ionian women; there were also Egyptian, Indian and Nubian women; a black, yellow or copper-colored skin was as suitable as the whitest to the highly voluptuous manifes-

\*Cf. the modern hula-hula (or "hootchie-kootchie") dance.

tations of the Ionic or Bactrian dance. The one was called *Bac-triasmus*, remarkable for its spasmodic movements of the loins; the other, *ionici motus*, imitated with an obscene verity the pantomime and peripetias of love. Horace assures us that the virgins of his time, more advanced than they should have been for their age and condition, took trouble to learn the poses and movements of the Ionic dance (*motus doceri gaudet ionicus matura virgo*). The Latin even indicates that they took pleasure in it. Among all these foreign women the palm was given to the Syrian (*ambubaiae*) who lent themselves to all purposes, as their name would seem to indicate. There were no good suppers without them; but since they did not pay the *meretricium*, or tax on public women, the aedile did not show them much favor when they were taken in fraud, and he would first sentence them to a fine, later to be whipped and finally to exile. In this latter case, they would leave by one gate of Rome and return by another. The greater part of the mountebanks did not work except for the rich and in the interior of houses; a few, however, performed in the public places and at the street corner, where it required no more than the sound of a flute or the tinkling of a bell to attract a compact crowd of people about the dancers and musicians. As to the dancers and musicians themselves, they performed exactly the same role as their companions.

This unbridled Prostitution, putting on a thousand disguises and creeping everywhere under a thousand varied forms, nourished and enriched an immense family of courtiers and pimps of both sexes, who kept shops of debauchery or who exercised in many fashions their degrading trade, without having anything to fear from the aedile's police; for the law blinked its eyes at lenocinium, provided it was not a Roman citizen or a Roman *ingenua* who bore the brand of infamy. But, inasmuch as the trade was a lucrative one, many Roman men and women of free birth and condition gave themselves secretly to the art of procurer, for a veritable art it was, one full of intrigues, of ruses and inven-

tions.\* The generic name of these depraved beings, punishable only by public contempt, was *leno* for the men, *lena* for the women. Priscianus derives these words from the verb, *lenire*, because, he says, this vile agent of Prostitution seduces and corrupts souls by means of gentle and caressing words (*deliniendo*). In the beginning, *leno* was applied indifferently to the two sexes, as though the *lenon* were neither male nor female; but later, the feminine, *lena*, was employed in order to characterize more precisely the intervention of women in this odious industry. "I am a *lenon*," says a character in the *Adelphoi* of Terence, "I am the common scourge of youth." Among the *lenons* of both sexes were a number of different species which had business relations with the different species of public women. We have already said that the bakers, the hostlers, the wine-shop proprietors and the bathhouse keepers as well as the women who kept baths, wine shops, inns and bakeries, all mingled more or less in the business of *lenocinium*. The *lenon* existed in all walks of life and hid himself under all sorts of masks; he had, as a rule, no particular costume or distinctive character. The Latin theater, which was continually placing him on the stage, had, however, given him a variegated habit and represented him as beardless and with shorn head. We must cite, also, among the professions which were most favorable to the traffic of the *lenons* those of the barber and perfumer; thus, under certain circumstances, *tonstor* and *unguentarius* are synonyms of *leno*. One of the ancient commentators of Petronius, a simple and candid Dutchman, Douza, enters into singular details on the subject of the barber shops of Rome,† in which the master barber kept a troop of beautiful young boys whose amusement was not to cut hair, depilate faces and trim beards, but who, trained from an early age in all the most unclean mysteries of debauchery, hired themselves out at a

\*This "art" was one that persisted in Latin countries, particularly among the Spaniards and Italians. Cf. Aretino's "The Art of the Procress (*Mezzana*)" in the *Ragionamenti* (translated by Putnam, Pascal Covici, Chicago, 1926.)

†On the subject of the Roman barber shops, see Terence's *Phormio*.

steep price for suppers and nocturnal fetes. (*Quorum frequenti opera non in tondenda barba, pilisque vellendis modo, aut barba rasitanda, sed vero et pygiacis sacris cinaedice, ne nefarie dicam, de nocte admininstrandis utebantur.*) As to the perfumers, their business placed them in direct communication with the militia of Prostitution, for whose use the essences, perfumed oils, odoriferous powders, erotic pomades and all the most delicate unguents had been invented and perfected; for, man or woman, young or old, one always perfumed oneself before entering the lists of Venus, so that a Ganymede was designated by the word *unguentatus*, that is, sprinkled with perfumed oil. "Each day," says Lucius Afranius, "the unguentarius appears before the mirror; he, whose eyebrows are shaved, whose beard has been pulled out and whose haunches have been depilated; he who, at the feasts, as a young man accompanied by his lover, sleeps upon the lowest couch, clad in a tunic with flowing sleeves; he who seeks not only wine, but the caresses of man (*qui non modo vinosus, sed virosus quoque sit*) . . . can one doubt that such a one as this does what the cinaedes are in the habit of doing?"

Ordinarily, all the slaves were trained for lenocinium; for this purpose, they had but to remember, as they grew older, the experience of their youth. The old ones, above all, had no other manner of devoting themselves anew to Prostitution. The servant maids, ancillae, for their part, merited the nicknames of *admonitrices*, of *stimulatrices*, and of *conciliatrices*. They carried letters, arranged the hour, the night, the rendezvous and the conditions, prepared the place and the arms of combat, aiding, exciting, impelling and leading on. Nothing could equal their cleverness, unless it was their roguishness. There was no such thing as an invincible virtue when they set themselves to overcome it. But it was necessary to give them much and promise them more. There were little servant maids, ancillulae, who did not yield to the cleverest and most deceitful. Nevertheless, the most officious domestics were less perverse and less despicable than the courtiers of debauchery, who took the field only from

love of gain, and who had no master or mistress to satisfy. It was of these lenons that Asconius Pedianus spoke in his commentary on Cicero: "These corrupters of prostitutes are in the same class with those persons whom they lead, despite themselves, to commit adulteries which the laws punish." *Perductores* were those who led their victims into vice and infamy; *adductores* were those charged with procuring subjects for debauchery, and who, so to speak, placed themselves on sale; the *tractatores* were those who drove a bargain of this sort. We cannot imagine the numbers and importance of such a traffic as this, which took place every day by means of mediation between the interested parties. Like the old procuresses, the lenons were almost invariably the stale debris of Prostitution, who possessed no more ardor for the service of others; a few even accumulated the profits and fatigues of both professions by combining them.

In conclusion, we must include, also, in this last group of male and female lenons, the masters and mistresses of the bad houses, the luponarii, who had the upper hand in these places. The entrepreneurs of Prostitution clung to the last rung of the ladder of shame, although the jurisconsult Ulpianus recognized the fact that luponars existed in the activities carried on in the houses of many honest folk. (*Nam et in multorum honestorum virorum praediis lupanaria exercentur.*) The proprietors of houses took no part in the infamy of their tenants; but besides the luponars, there were still other degrees of turpitude and execration which belonged by right to the *belluarii*, the *caprarii* and the *anserarii*; the first had intercourse with beasts of various sorts, especially with dogs and monkeys; the second with nannygoats; the third with geese,\* "the delight of Priapus," as Petronius calls them; and these impure animals, trained to the trade of their guardians, offered themselves as docile accomplices to the crime of bestiality! "If men are lacking," says Juvenal in describing the mys-

\*See Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, American edition, pp. 562-3, "Is there anything wrong with the goose?"

teries of the Good Goddess, in his satire on Women, “the maenad of Priapus is ready to submit herself to a vigorous ass.”

. . . . . *Hic si*

*Quaeritur et desunt homines, mora nulla peripsam  
Quominus imposito clunem submittat asello.*

(This is the end of Volume One of the Original Text.)



## CHAPTER XVII.

THE places of Prostitution at Rome were, of necessity, as numerous as the prostitutes; they presented as many varieties, indicated ordinarily by their names, just as the names of public women were descriptive of the different varieties of their trade. There were, as we have said, two great categories of women, the sedentary and the vagrant, those who worked by day and those who worked by night; there were, also, two principal kinds of public houses, those destined only for the practice of legal Prostitution, the luponars, properly so called, and those which, under various pretexts, afforded asylums for debauchery and offered, so to speak, the means of hiding it, such as the wine-shops, the taverns, the baths, etc. It is to be understood that these establishments, always suspect and of ill fame, did not always stand on the same leg and received, from the Prostitution which crept into them stealthily, or which was installed in them with effrontery, a particular aspect, a local physiognomy and a more or less animated, a more or less indecent life.

Publius Victor, in his book on the *Places and Regions of Rome*, determines the existence of forty-six luponars; but he is speaking only of the most important, which might be regarded as establishments of public utility, and which were placed under the direct surveillance of the aediles. It would be difficult to explain, otherwise, this small number of luponars in comparison with the great number of meretrices. Sextus Rufus, in his nomenclature of the Regions of Rome, does not enumerate the luponars which were found there, but lets their existence be understood from the forty-eight baths in the first region, called the porta Capena, in addition to the Thermae of Commodius, those of Severus and a number of baths which he designates by the names of their founders or their proprietors. Otherwise, he

cites by name but a single lupanar, created by Heliogabalus in the sixth region, under the insolent name of *little senate of women* (*senatulum mulierum*). There is not, in the Latin authors, a single complete description of a lupanar; but one may easily compile one, with the most scrupulous exactitude, from five or six passages in the poets who, with no preliminaries, conduct their readers into those places with which it is assumed they are familiar. We may assume that if the interior organization of the lupanars was practically the same in all cases, they differed in the matter of furniture, by reason of the quarter in which they were situated. Thus, the dirtiest and the most populous were certainly those of the fifth region, called the Esquiline, and those of the eleventh region, called the Great Circus; the most elegant and best-fitted were those of the fourth region, that of the Temple of Peace, which included the quarter of Love and that of Venus. As to the Subura, situated in the second region, that of Mount Coelius, it assembled about the great market (*macellum magnum*) and the barracks of the foreign troops (*castra peregrina*) a throng of houses of Prostitution (*lupariae*), as Sextus Rufus calls them in his nomenclature, and a still more considerable number of wine-shops, hostleries, barber shops (*tabernae*) and bakeries. The other regions of the city were not exempt from the scourge of these lupariae, although they possessed also bakeries, barber shops and hostleries; but these bad places were always bare and little frequented; the aediles had taken care to confine them as much as possible to regions remote from the center of the city, all the more for the reason that the ordinary clientele of these places inhabited the suburbs and plebeian quarters. It was, always, about the theatres, the circuses, the markets and the fields that the lupanars preferably grouped themselves in order to take as large a tribute as possible from the passions and purses of the people.

The Great Circus appeared to have been surrounded with vaulted cells (*cellae* and *fornices*), which served only for the use of the low people before, during and after the games; but these

asylums of debauchery, accredited by usage, should not be included in the category of lupanars regulated by the aedile's police. Prudentius, recounting the martyrdom of St. Agnes, says positively that the great vaults and porticoes which still existed in his time about the Great Circus, had been abandoned to the public practice of debauchery; and Panvinius, in his treatise on the *Games* of the Circus, concludes from this passage that all the circuses had lupanars as indispensable annexes. We know, as a matter of fact, that the meretrices who assisted at the solemn rites of the circus and the theatrical performances, quitted their seats as often as they were called out to satisfy the increasingly warm desires of those about them. The learned Jesuit, Boulanger, in his treatise *Du Cirque*, does not hesitate to declare that Prostitution took place in the circus and even in the theatre, and he cites this verse from an old Latin poet in honor of a courtezan who was well known at the Great Circus: *Deliciae populi, magno notissima Circo Quintilia.* In short, under the rows of seats occupied by the people, vaulted arches formed sombre retreats, favorable to popular Prostitution, which did not demand many refinements. One would almost be authorized in assigning the same destination to the ruins of an immense subterranean construction, which is still to be seen near the ancient port of Misenum and which is always referred to as the *Hundred Rooms* (*centum camerae*). It is probable that this singular edifice, the use of which we do not know and find it hard to understand, was but a vast lupanar appropriated to the needs of the Roman fleet.

But habitually, the lupanars, far from being built in such gigantic proportions, were able to accomodate but a limited number of very narrow cells, without windows, having no other exit than a door, which often was closed only by a curtain. The plan of one of the houses of Pompeii may give us a very just idea of what a lupanar was like, with its rows of little cells, which undoubtedly opened under a portico and upon an interior court, as in those houses in which the sleeping rooms (*cubiculi*), generally very small and with room for but a single bed, are

lighted only by a door, through which two persons cannot pass except sidewise. The rooms were merely more numerous and closer to one another in the lupanars. During the day, the establishment, being closed, had no need of a sign, and it was but a futile luxury when the master of the place had the obscene attribute of Priapus painted upon the wall; this same figure was suspended at the entrance of the resort dedicated to the god. Of an evening, at the ninth hour, a fire-pot or a large lamp in the form of a phallus served as a pharos to the debauchee, who came there boldly, or who was sometimes drawn there by chance. The girls took their places before the door of the house; each had her accustomed cell and in front of the door of this cell was a signboard on which was inscribed the name (*meretricium nomen*) which the courtezan bore in the practice of her trade. Sometimes, in addition to the name, there was an indication of the price of admission to the cell, in order to avoid disputes on one side or the other. If the cell were occupied, the signboard was reversed, and on the rear was to be read the word: OCCUPATA (busy). When the cell had no occupant, it was said, in the language of the place, to be *naked* (*nuda*). Plautus, in his *Asinaria*, and Martial, in his epigrams, have preserved for us these details of manners. "May she write on your door," says Plautus: "*I am busy.*" Which proves that, under certain circumstances, the inscription was written in chalk or in charcoal by the courtezan herself. "The immodest lena," says Martial, "closes the cell which is furnished with a customer. (*Obscena nudam lena fornicem clausit*)."<sup>1</sup> A passage of Seneca, badly interpreted, gave rise to the belief that, in certain lupanars, the meretrices who stood in front of the door bore the signboards suspended from their necks and even fastened to their foreheads; but this phrase, *Nomen tuum pependit in fronte; stetisti cum meretricibus*, is better understood by seeing this signboard suspended from the door (*in fronte*), while the girls remained seated beside it.

The rooms were almost all furnished in the same manner; the difference consisted only in the greater or less amount of

furniture and in the paintings which adorned the partitions. These paintings, in distemper and in *l'eau d'oeuf*, represented, either in the form of pictures or ornaments, the subjects which were most conformable to the habits of the place; in the lupanars of the people, there were gross scenes of Prostitution; in those of a little higher class, there were erotic images drawn from mythology; there were allegories taken from the cults of Venus, Cupid, Priapus and the domestic gods of debauchery. The phallus reappeared unceasingly in the most clownish form; it became, in turn, a bird, a fish, an insect; it disappeared into baskets of fruits; it pursued nymphs under water and doves in the air; it was wreathed in garlands and braided in crowns; the imagination of the painter seemed to play with the indecent emblem of Prostitution with the object of exaggerating the indecency; but the remarkable thing about these paintings, so altogether appropriate to the place they occupied, was the fact that one never saw in them the organ of the woman alone; as though there were a tacit convention to respect it, even in the place in which it was held in the greatest contempt. The same scenes, the same images, were to be met with, often, in the painted ornamentation of conjugal bedrooms; visual modesty no longer existed among the Romans, who almost deified nudity. The interior decoration of the cells of the lupanar was not, on the other hand, commendable for its freshness or its brilliancy; the smoke of lamps and a thousand nameless stains disfigured the walls, which bore, here and there, the stigmata of their unknown guests. As to the furniture, it was composed of a mat, a bed covering and a lamp. The mat, ordinarily grossly woven out of reeds and rushes, was often ripped and always worn and beaten down; it was replaced in some houses by cushions and even by a small wooden bed (*pulvinar, cubiculum, pavimentum*); the covering, hideously soiled, was but a miserable mass of pieces of various stuff, called on this account *cento* or patchwork. The lamp, in copper or in bronze, shed an indecisive light through an atmosphere filled with deleterious miasmas, which prevented the oil

from burning and the flames from rising above a smoky aureole. This miserable furniture was chosen expressly so that no one might be tempted to steal it; there was nothing to steal in such places as these.

And yet, it is certain, from the very designations of these houses of debauchery, that they were not all frequented by the vile populace, and that they presented, as a consequence, notable differences in interior regime. In the best-ordered lupanars, a fountain and a basin adorned the square court, the *impulvium*, around which cells or chambers, the *cellae*, were arranged; otherwise, these rooms were called *sellae*, places to sit, because they were too small to contain a bed. But in the lupanars reserved exclusively for the plebs, and which were no more than caves or subterranean passages, each cell, being vaulted, was known as a *fornix*; it is from this word, which soon became a synonym for lupanar, that the word *fornication* was coined to express what took place in the shadows of the *fornices*. The infectious odor of these vaults was notorious, and those who had been in them bore for a long time afterwards this nauseating odor, which was something besides that of smoke and oil: *Oleni in fornice*, says Horace; *redolet adhuc fuliginum fornicis*, says Seneca. There was a lupanar of the lowest class called a *stabula*, because visitors were often received there, pell mell, upon the straw, as in a stable. The *pergulae*, or balconies, owed their name to the character of their construction: sometimes, an open gallery ran the length of the first floor and overhung the public way: the girls were placed on exhibition on this scaffold-like structure, and the leno or the lena remained below at the door; in other cases, on the contrary, the leno or lena occupied a high window which overlooked the throng of youths and girls. Sometimes, the pergula was but a little low house, in the form of a penthouse, under which were seated victims of one or the other sex. When the lupanar was surmounted by a sort of tower or pyramid, on the top of which, of an evening, a lantern was lighted, they called it a *turturilla*, or dove-hatch, for the reason that doves and turtledoves made their

nests there; St. Isidore of Seville, speaking of these nests, permits himself a word play which is not as orthodox as it might be: *Ita dictus locus, quo corruptelae fiebant, quod ibi turturi opera daretur, id est peni.* The *casaurium* was the lupanar beyond the wall, a simple hut, covered with reeds and stubble, which served as a retreat to the wandering troop of girls who were at odds with the aedile's police. The word *casaurium* in the mouth of the people appeared to have no more remote an origin than *casa*, a thatched cottage, hut or barracks; but scholars have found in this word a Greek etymology, deriving it from *Rassa* or from *Rasaura*, which signified meretrix: *Rasaura* had become, quite naturally, *casaurium*. It was in these holes to which the *scrupedae* (*stony ones*) sometimes fled that Prostitution ordinarily hid itself, in the midst of rocks and rubbish.

The lupanars had, moreover, certain general names which were applied to all without distinction; "*meritoria*," says St. Isidore of Seville, "are those secret places in which adulteries are committed." They were above all those places devoted to the Prostitution of men, of children and of *meritorii*. "*Ganaeae*," says Donatius, "are those subterranean caverns where debaucheries are committed, the name of which is derived from the Greek, *gas*, earth." "*Ganei*," says the Jesuit Boulanger, "are those shops of Prostitution so named from analogy with *ganos*, pleasure, and *gyne*, woman." The expression, *lustrum*, is frequently employed in the sense of lupanar, and what was at first but a play of words became a usual locution in which no malice was longer seen. *Lustrum* signified at once *expiation* and *wild wood*. The first traces of Prostitution were left in the thick shadows of forests, and afterwards, as though to expiate her wild beast manners, the prostitute paid a *lustral* and expiatory tax; this was the origin of the word *lustrum* used for lupanar. "Those who, in retired and shameful places, abandon themselves to the vices of gluttony and idleness," says Festus, "deserve to be accused of living as beasts (*in lustris vitam agere*)."<sup>1</sup> The poet Lucilius gives us a still better understanding of the true meaning of this expression in his

verses: "What commerce is yours, in your quest about the walls and in the segregated places? (*in lustris circum oppida lustrans*)."<sup>1</sup> The name of *desidiabula* was also, and with reason, applied to the lupanar to characterize the idleness of its wretched inhabitants. If there were only women in an establishment of Prostitution, it took the name of *senate of women, conventicle, court of meretrices (senatus mulierum, conciliabulum, meretricia curia, etc.)*; and according to whether these names were taken in good or evil part, epithets were added to complete the sense; thus Plautus speaks of the *conventicle of misfortune*, which was one of these infamous places. When both Venuses, to adopt the Latin euphemism, were satisfied in the same resorts, these resorts were pompously known as *consistories of all pleasures (libidinum consistorium)*.

The personnel of the lupanar varied as much as its clientele. Sometimes the *leno* or the *lena*, had in his establishment only slaves purchased with his own money and instructed by himself; sometimes this personage was but the proprietor of the place and merely served as a go-between for his clients, who left him a share of the benefits of each night; sometimes, the master or the mistress of the place sufficed for everything, prepared the sign-board, discussed the bargains, brought water or refreshments, acted as sentinel and guarded the *busy* cells; sometimes, again these speculators distained to concern themselves with minor details, but had servant maids and slave girls each of whom had his special employment; the *ancillae ornatrices* watched over the toilet of customers, repaired disorders in the toilet and rouged faces. The *aquarii* or *aquarioli* distributed refreshing drinks of cold water, wine and vinegar to the debauchees who complained of heat or fatigue; the *bacario* was a little slave who assisted the guests in washing up, presenting the water in a vase (*bacar*) with a long spout and a long neck; lastly, the *villicus* or steward had the task of debating prices with the clients and seeing that they paid before reversing the sign on the cell. There were, moreover, men and women attached to the establishment to act as

subordinates in the practice of lenocinium. It was their duty to go through the neighborhood surrounding the lupanar and recruit for customers, by calling to them and attracting them in order to draw in the young and old libertines. Hence, the names applied to them of adductores, conductores, and above all, admissarii. These emissaries of Prostitution drew their names from the fact that they were always ready, at need, to change their role and to prostitute themselves if an occasion for a debauch on their own part occurred. In the language of cattle-graziers and Roman peasants, admissarius was, quite simply, quite naïvely, the stallion, the bull, which is led to the cow or to the mare. Cicero, in his discourse against Piso, gives us an evidence of the monomania of these men-hunters and pleasure-seekers. "This emissary, as soon as he knew that the philosopher had indulged in a eulogy of pleasure, was piqued to the quick; he was stimulated in all his voluptuous instincts by the thought that he had found not a master of virtue, but a prodigy of libertinism."

The costume of the meretrices in the lupanars was characterized in no other manner than by the coiffure, which consisted of a blond wig; for the courtezan indicated by that the fact that she made no claims to the title of matron, all the Roman matrons having black hair, which testified to their birth, as implied in the Latin word *ingenua*. This blond wig, made with hair or tresses which had been gilded and tinted, seems to have been the essential part of the complete disguise which the courtezan affected in taking her place in the lupanar, which she did not even enter without a *nom de guerre*. She must, otherwise, in other points, avoid all resemblance to respectable women. Thus, she might not wear the bandelet, "*vitta*," a large ribbon with which the matrons bound their hair; she might not put on a stole, a long tunic falling to the ankles, which was reserved exclusively for matrons. "They call *matrons*," says Festus, "those who have the right to wear stoles." But the rule of the aedile relative to the dress of courtezans did not concern that which they adopted for the service of the lupanar. Thus, in the majority of these places,

they were nude, absolutely nude, or covered with a veil of transparent silk, under which one lost no secret of their nudity, but they were always coiffed with a blond wig, adorned with gold pins or crowned with flowers. Not only did they await their customers nude in their cells, or even promenade under the porticoes "*nudasque meretrices furtim constrictantes*," says Petronius, but they even appeared in this condition at the entrance of the luponars, in the street and under the gaze of passersby. Juvenal, in his eleventh satire, shows us an infamous *giton*\* on the threshold of his malodorous cave, (*nudum olido stans fornice*). Often, like the prostitutes of Jerusalem and Babylon, they would veil the face, leaving the rest of the body unveiled, or they would merely cover their breasts with stuff of gold. *Tunc nuda papillis prostit auratis*, says Juvenal. The customers (*amatores*) had, therefore, merely to choose according to their tastes. The place was, moreover, but feebly lighted, by a firepot or by a lamp which burned at the door, and the keenest eye could discover in its rays nothing but immobile forms and voluptuous poses. In the interior of the cells, there was not much to be seen although the objects were close at hand, "and sometimes even, the lamp being extinguished by a current of air or from lack of oil, one did not even know," says one poet, "whether one was having an affair with a Canidia or with his grandmother."

When a poor unfortunate child sacrificed herself for the first time there was a fete in the luponar; they hung up at the door a lantern which cast an unaccustomed glow over the environs of the evil place; they surrounded with laurel branches the facade of the horrible sanctuary, and these laurels would outrage public modesty for a number of days; and sometimes, when the sacrifice had been consummated, the author of the villainous act, which he paid for very dearly, would leave the hole, crowned himself with laurels. This impure enemy of virginity would imagine that he had gained thus a fine victory, and he would have it celebrated

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\*A male prostitute. Also, the name of a character in Petronius' *Cena Trimalchionis*.

by musicians, who belonged also to the personnel of debauchery. Such a custom, tolerated by the aedile, was all the more fatal an outrage to manners for the reason that the newly married, especially among the people, preserved an analogous custom and also adorned with laurel branches the door of their dwelling the day after the wedding night. *Ornentur*, says Juvenal, *postes et grandi janua lauro.* Tertullian also says, in speaking of the new bride: "she must come out from this door, decorated with garlands and lanterns, as from a new consistory of public debauchery." We may also understand that the establishment and opening of a new lupanar, occasioned a similar use of laurels. In reading Martial, Catullus and Petronius, one is forced, with horror, to recognize the fact that the prostitution of male children in the lupanars of Rome, exceeded that of women. It was Domitian who had the honor of forbidding this execrable Prostitution, and if the law which he enacted to prevent it was not rigorously observed, we may, at least, believe that it halted the progress of these monstrosities. Martial addresses to the emperor this eulogy, which permits us to supplement the silence of historians on the Domitian law relative to lupanars; "The young boy, previously mutilated by the infamous art of the avid trafficker in slaves, the young lad no longer weeps the loss of his virility, and the indigent mother no longer sells to a rich procurer her son destined to Prostitution. That modesty which before your time had deserted the conjugal couch, has begun to penetrate into the retreats of debauchery."

Thus, under Domitian, they no longer castrated children to change them into women for purposes of Prostitution, and Nerva confirms the edict of his predecessor; but this castration continued to take place, beyond the bounds of the Roman Empire, or at least outside of Rome, and slave merchants brought there incessantly young boys who had been mutilated in different manners, although this was proscribed by Roman jurisprudence, even while the law authorized the priests of Cybele to make eunuchs and masters to deprive their slaves, at least in part, of their

virility. Three species were known, all three being utilized for purposes of debauchery: the *castrati*, those who had preserved nothing of their sex; the *spadones*, those who had kept but the impotent sign, and the *thlibiae*, those who had undergone, in place of surgical castration, the compression of a cruel hand.

We find in the Latin writers but three descriptions of a lupanar and of what took place inside. One of these descriptions, the most celebrated, introduces us with Messalina into the obscene hole where she prostituted herself to the muleteers of Rome; "as soon as she believed the Emperor to be asleep," relates Juvenal in his admirable poem, which prose is incapable of rendering, "the august courtezan, who dared prefer to the bed of the Caesars the pallet of prostitutes, would rise up, accompanied by a single servant. Hiding her black hair under a blond wig, she enters a much frequented lupanar, drawing aside the botched curtain; she takes the cell which is her own; naked, her throat covered with a gilded veil, under the false name of Lysisca, inscribed on the door, she exposes the belly which she has brought you, noble Brittanicus! She receives with a caressing air, all who enter, and she demands from them her wages; then, couched on her back, she sustains the efforts of numerous assailants; finally, when the lenon dismisses the girls, she leaves tristfully; and yet, she still burns with desires which she has merely succeeded in irritating and, fatigued with men but not satiated, she hides her soiled face, her eyes weak and blackened by the lamp, and carries with her the odor of the lupanar." The haughty indignation of the poet bursts forth in this picture and almost makes the obscenity disappear. After Juvenal, it is something of a let-down to cite a simple commentator, Symphosianus, who has written in the *History of Appolonius of Tyre* that Greek romance filled with fables which all the fables of history have adopted and made famous: "The young girl prostrates herself at the feet of the lenon," says Symphosianus; "she cries: 'Have pity on my virginity and do not prostitute my body with a shameful sign.' The lenon calls the steward and says to him: 'let a servant maid come

and adorn her and have written on a signboard: “He who deflowers Tarsia shall give a half pound of silver (about 150 francs in our money); afterward, she shall be given to every comer for one piece of gold (twenty francs).” “. This passage would be still more precious for the history of Roman manners, if we were more sure of the exact sense of the words *medium libram* and *singulos solidos*, which established the special price of virginity and the common wage of Prostitution.

Petronius, in his *Satyricon*, has left us a very curious fragment, too important not to be cited textually; it is the picture of a Roman lupanar: “Tired of running and bathed with perspiration, I come upon a little old woman who is selling peas. ‘Tell me, mother,’ I say, ‘do you not know where I live?’ Charmed with so naïve a question, she replies, ‘Why should I not know it?’ She rises and starts to walk in front of me. I thought she was a soothsayer; but soon, when we had arrived in a very segregated place, this amiable old woman drew back an evil-looking curtain. ‘It is here,’ she said, ‘that you must live’ (*hic, inquit, debes habitare.*) Even as I was telling her that I did not know the house, I saw people promenading between the new meretrices and their signboards. I understood later, and even too late, that I had been brought to a house of prostitution. The detestable wiles of this cursed old woman! I covered my head with my robe and was about to flee through the lupanar to the opposite door (*ad alterum partem.*)” This last fact tends to prove that a lupanar had ordinarily, two doors, the one which one entered and the other by which one left, opening undoubtedly, into two different streets, in order the better to conceal the habits of those that came there; one might conclude from this that it was bad for a man of reputation to frequent these places, despite the tolerance of Roman manners in this respect. It is certain, moreover, according to various authorities who confirm the evidence of Petronius, that one did not enter or leave a lupanar without having his face covered and hidden; some wore for this purpose a *cucullus* or hood, drawn over the eyes; others wrapped their heads in their robes or their mantles. Seneca, in his

*Happy Life*, speaks of a libertine who frequented bad places, not timidly, not with concealment, but even with his face uncovered (*in operto capite*). Capitolinus, in the *History of Augustus*; shows us a debauched Emperor visiting the night taverns and lupanars, his head covered with a vulgar *cucullus*. (*obtecto capite ocullo vulgari*).

As to the wages in the lupanars, it could not have been fixed, since each girl had a signboard indicating her name and her price; the passage from Symphosianus, cited above, has misled commentators, who have sought to determine, each in his own manner, the tariff which the lenon fixed for the defloration of Tarsia and the price current of her favors; for scholars are not in accord as to the value of the pound and the sou in antiquity. Symphosianus does not say, moreover, whether a pound in gold or a pound in silver is meant. In the first case it has been estimated that the half pound, called for on Tarsia's signboard as the price of her virginity represented 433 francs in our actual money; whereas it would be but thirty-seven francs and sixty-four centimes, if the lenon was speaking of a pound in silver. We have made other calculations and have arrived at other results. In our opinion, the price of the prelibation (*primae aggressionis pretium* is the word of scholars) would have been 150 francs; as to the tariff on the following *stuprations*, the learned Pierruges estimates them at 11 francs, 42 centimes for the golden sou and 78 centimes for the silver sou. We have found, in our calculations, that it was 20 francs. Moreover, there was nothing uniform about this wage, and since it was never subject to any administrative control, it varied in ratio to the reputation and merits of the one advertised on the signboard. However, there is, in Petronius, one precise detail, which enables us to learn the price at which a cell in a lupanar was rented: "While I was wandering," says Asclyte, "through the whole city without discovering where I had left my lodgings, I was approached by a citizen of respectable air, who very obligingly offered to act as my guide. Entering, then, certain tortuous alleys, he led me to a bad place, where he

made indecent propositions to me, drawing out his purse. Already, the mistress of the place had received an *as* for the cell (*jam pro cella meretrix assem exegerat*). If the rent of a cell cost an *as* (a little more than a sou), it may be supposed that the rest was not paid for very dearly. As a matter of fact, when Messalina demands her wages, (*aera proposcit*), Juvenal gives us clearly to understand that she was content with a little copper money. We have already spoken of those Prostitutes who were only taxed at two oboles and at one quadrans, which had caused them to be nicknamed *quadrantariae* and *diobolares*. Festus thus explains their name: *Diabolares meretrices dicuntur, quae duabus obolis ducuntur*. It was competition which had caused the wages of Prostitution to drop so low.



## CHAPTER XVIII

IT WOULD be impossible to say at what epoch legal Prostitution was regularly established at Rome, or at what time it was subjected to police regulation, under the jurisdiction of the aediles. But it is probable that these magistrates, from the beginning of their office, which goes back to the year of Rome 260, were concerned with imposing certain punishments for Prostitution on the streets, and with outlining for it a sort of jurisprudence in the interests of the people. Unfortunately, we are in possession of but few details regarding this jurisprudence, details doubtful or almost effaced, but which always permit us to appreciate their equity and wisdom. We might almost be assured that none of the anticipatory provisions of the modern police with regard to women of evil life had been neglected by the Roman aediles. This popular magistracy had realized that it ought, while leaving to these degraded women the greatest possible liberty, to restrain them from practicing a sort of brazen usurpation of the rights of good women; that is why it was concerned, above all, with giving Prostitution, a public character. In inflicting on it distinctive marks, branding it with infamy in the eyes of all, in order to deprive it of the desire and the means of appropriating brazenly the privileges of virtue and modesty; in refusing to tolerate a courtezan's being taken for a matron, it spared the matron from being taken for a courtezan. The first concern of the aediles was to force the courtezan to come before them and avow her infamous profession, demanding of them the right to give herself openly to Prostitution with this legal authorization, which was called *licentia stupri*. Such is the origin of the registration of public women on the books of the aediles.

For the rest, we are in possession of no information as to the manner of their registration; it appears that every woman who

desired to make a trade of her body (*sui quaestum facere*) was bound to present herself before the aedile and reveal her shameful design, which the aedile sometimes endeavored to combat with a little good advice. If the woman persisted, she was registered as devoted from then on, to Prostitution. She indicated her name, her age, the place of her birth, the name which she had chosen for her new state in life and even, if we are to believe one writer, the price which she adopted, once for all, as the tariff of her odious commerce. Tacitus says, in Book II. of his *Annals*, that this registration with the aedile of women who wished to prostitute themselves was of ancient origin, and that the Law thought it could not better punish these immodest ones than by forcing them thus to make a public act of their dishonor (*more inter veteres recepto, qui satis poenarum adversus impudicas in ipsa professione flagitii credebant*). But what was a bridle in the austere times of the republic became, under the emperors, a sport and a derision, since one sees then the daughters and wives of senators claiming from the aedile the *licentia stupri*. We understand, moreover, what was the judicial utility of this registration. On the one hand, there was obtained, by this means, an authentic list of all the women who had to pay the State the tax for Prostitution, the duty attached as a sign of servitude to this shameful profession. On the other hand, in all the cases in which a courtesan failed in her duty to her profession, in the brawls, the quarrels, the differences, the scandals, the infractions and the derelictions of all kinds to which the shameful profession often gave rise, one had but to consult the records of the aedile in order to ascertain the civil status of the party involved. One learned, in this manner, not only the true name of the guilty party or the victim, but also the *nom de guerre, luparium nomen*, under which she was known in the world of debauchery. Plautus, in his *Poenulus*, speaks of these degraded creatures, who changed their names in order to make an unworthy commerce of their bodies (*manque hodie earum mutarentur nomina, facerentique indignum genere quaestum corpore*). It was no less necessary to indicate upon the

registers, the rate which she fixed for her services, for the learned Pierrugues has recorded this fact, however strange it may be, in his *Glossarium eroticum*: that one went before the aedile to debate the value of and payment for an act of Prostitution, as though it were a matter of bread or cheese (*tanquam mercedis annonariae, depretio concubitus jus dicebat aedilis*). The task of the aedile was, thus, a multiple and, often, a very delicate one; but the aedile was equal to anything.

The registration of a courtezan for the *licentia stupri* was indelible, and a woman who had once received this stain could never wash it away or rid herself of it. One might renounce her scandalous profession and make herself a sort of honorable amends, by living chastely, by marrying, by giving birth to semi-legitimate children, but there was no power which had the right entirely to rehabilitate her and to erase her name from the archives of legal Prostitution. She remained, moreover, as we have already said, stigmatized by the mark that she had merited one time in her life, under the impulse of necessity, of misery or even of ignorance. And yet, according to the observation of the learned Douza, as soon as the meretrices had quitted their trade, they hastened to take their true names and leave behind them their old names of the lupanar, which they had affixed to their sign-boards there. One jurisconsult, who does not cite his authorities, has assumed that every courtezan at the moment of her registration, took an oath before the aedile and swore never to abandon the ignoble profession which she was accepting freely, without constraint and without repugnance; but the unfortunate ones bound by this oath would have been relieved of it, after a law of Justinian (*Novella LI*) had declared that such an oath was against good manners and so was not binding on the imprudent one who had taken it. This vow of Prostitution, of which history affords a number of examples from the religious point of view, among others, the case of the Locrians, whose daughters swore to prostitute themselves at the next fete, if their fathers achieved a victory over their enemies—this vow to legal Prosti-

tution has in it nothing of the unlikely and is even in harmony with that brand of infamy which was its immediate consequence.

It has been asked why this matriculation of the meretrices took place before the aedile, rather than the censor, whose duties included the surveillance of manners. Justus Lipsius, in his *Commentaries* on Tacitus, replies to this purely speculative question, by remarking that the aediles were charged with the inner policing of the lupanars, the wine shops and all suspected places of Prostitution. It is on the subject of the jurisdiction of the aediles over these places that Seneca has this to say: "You will find virtue in the temple, in the forum, in the curia, on the walls of the city; but pleasure you will find, most often, hiding itself and seeking the baths and sweating rooms, in the places where the aedile is feared (*ad loca aedilem metuentia*)."<sup>1</sup> Justus Lipsius might have added, in order to explain better the competence of the aedile in matters of Prostitution, that the aedile was forced to include among the duties of his office, the keeping of the public highway, *via publica*, which belonged, essentially, to Prostitution and which was almost synonymous with it. "No one forbids going and coming on the highway," says Plautus, alluding to the use which each might make of a public woman, with the understanding, of course, that he paid her. (*Quin quod, palam est venale, si argentum est, emas. Nemo ire quemquam publica prohibet via.*) The aedile, then, had the policing of the street and everything that might be considered as its dependency; thus the public places came under the jurisdiction of the aedile.

At first, and Justinian says this expressly, women who gave themselves to Prostitution, without being registered with the aedile, and without having purchased the right to the free practice of their immodest profession, were subject to a fine and even to expulsion from the city, in case they were taken in a flagrant dereliction; but ordinarily, those who found themselves at fault, provided they were still young and able to earn something, would attract to themselves some charitable soul of a lenon, who would take upon himself the task of paying their fines and looking after

their registration, and who, by way of reimbursement, would make them work for his profit, by shutting them up in a house of ill fame. Vagabond prostitutes, *erratica scorta*, were not, then, permitted at Rome, but it was necessary to wink at their number and their varied habits; it would have required an army of custodians to guard the streets and edifices, a senate of aediles to judge the derelictions and a throng of lictors to beat with rods the guilty parties and to execute the sentences of condemnation. The city of Rome contained a multitude of temples, statues and public monuments, such as aqueducts, hot baths, tombs and market places, etc., the architectural arrangement of which was only too favorable to Prostitution. There was, at every step, a somber vault under which, by night, a prostitute found a couch; every vaulted place (*arcuarius* or *arguatus*) served as an asylum to wandering debauchery, which no one had the right to disturb, for everyone had the right to sleep in the open air, *sub dio*. One might even infer, from a number of historical facts, that certain isolated places in the neighborhood of certain chapels and certain statues were the ordinary theaters of nocturnal Prostitution. It is, thus, that we see Julia, daughter of Augustus, going to prostitute herself at a street corner, in front of a statue of the satyr Maryas, and a place where this species of obscene sacrifice was accomplished was always occupied, from the time night had covered with a starry dais the couch of stone which served as altar for the hideous sacrifice. All that was needed was a statue of Priapus or of some guardian god, armed with a whip, a stick or a club, to protect all the nocturnal evildoers who came to seek refuge under his auspices and to find shelter in his shadow.

It was, then, but rarely that the aedile made use of rigor with regard to offences of this nature; but on the other hand, he sometimes exercised a sufficiently troublesome supervision over the public houses which were dependent on his jurisdiction. He not only made continual investigations for the purpose of ferreting out crimes which might have been committed in these houses particularly subject to his surveillance, but he often assured

himself, in person, that all going on within them was in conformity with the law. We have cited, more than once, suspect or infamous places which resorted to the jurisdiction of the aedile. It was in these places that Prostitution went into hiding, in order to escape the State tax, and it was here that the lenons gave themselves to the basest sort of negotiations. The aedile, preceded by his lictors, would run through the street at every hour of the day and night, enter wherever his presence might be useful and make sure, with his own eyes, of the interior regime of these laboratories of debauchery. When the approach of the aedile was announced from afar, the women of ill repute, gamblers, banished slaves and malefactors of all sorts would take to their feet, and at once, the wine shops, hostelries and houses of ill fame would be emptied. This urban policing belonged to the plebeian aedile, on whom reposed the active duties of the office. The great patrician aediles, seated in their curule chairs, did nothing but judge those cases sent them by the tribunes, purely administrative in their nature. This division of powers and duties had been established naturally about the year of Rome 388, when to the two plebeian aediles the senate added two curule or patrician ones. These latter, alone, wore a distinctive habit, the *roba praetexta*, made of white wool bordered with purple, whereas the others were only recognizable to their lictors, or rather, to their apparitors, a sort of usher who walked in front of them, opening doors and announcing the name and rank of the aedile. For an aedile might not enter a particular house except by virtue of his office and in the line of his duty. There was much talk at Rome of the discomfiture of a curule aedile to whom a courtezan had had the audacity to hold up her head, and who found he possessed no advantage over the latter before the tribune of the people. Aulus Gellius reports this memorable arrest as he had found it in a book of Atteius Capito, entitled *Conjectures*. A. Hostilius Mancinus, a curule aedile, wished to be introduced during the night into the home of a meretrix named Mamilia; the latter refused to receive him, although he an-

nounced his name and prerogatives; for he was alone, without his lictors; he did not wear the *roba praetexta* and, what was more, he had no business as an aedile in that house. Irritated by encountering so much difficulty with a public woman, he threatened to break down the door and endeavored so to do. Then Mamilia, who was not disconcerted by this violence, pretended not to recognize him and pushed stones down on his head from a balcony (*de tabulato*). The aedile was wounded in the head. The next day he cited before the people the insolent Mamilia and accused her of having made an attack on his person. Mamilia told how these things had taken place; how the aedile, in fact, had endeavored to force her door, while all she had done was to prevent him by dropping the stones. She added that Mancinus, coming from a supper party, had offered himself to her under the influence of wine and with a crown of flowers on his forehead. The tribunes approved the conduct of Mamilia by declaring that Mancinus, in presenting himself at night, half drunk and crowned with flowers, at the door of a courtezan, had deserved to be disgracefully chased away. They forbade him thereafter to make pleas before the people, and the courtezan thus had the better of the aedile.

This curious fact would seem to prove that Mamilia dwelt in a particular house which was beyond the police jurisdiction of the aediles; for in these places of free customs, depending on his immediate authority, one would not have dared resist an aedile to this degree. Thus, these magistrates paid incessant visits to the baths and rubbing rooms, the wine shops and hostleries, the bake shops, the butcher shops (*lanii*), the delicatessen shops (*macellarii*), the barbers and the perfumers. They certainly would have been embarrassed if they had endeavored to establish, pursue and punish all the cases of fraudulent and prohibited Prostitution which they met with on their visits. It was, above all, in the public baths that the most monstrous debaucheries hid themselves; and one might say that Prostitution always increased at Rome in proportion to the number of baths that were built. Publius Victor counted eight hundred baths, great as well as

small, in the environs of the city, and as it is known the rich citizens made a point of honor of founding, through their wills, a *piscina* or rubbing room, destined for the use of the people, there is nothing astonishing in the multitude of these baths, of which the largest held not less than one thousand persons at a time. In the austere days of the republic, the bath was surrounded by all the precautions of modesty and mystery; not only the sexes, but even the ages were separated; a father did not bathe with his son who had reached the age of puberty; nor a son-in-law with his father-in-law; service was provided by men or women, according to whether the bath received, exclusively, women or men. These establishments were not yet very numerous, and there were certain hours reserved for men and certain hours for women, who followed one another in the same basins without ever being able to meet. Cicero tells us that the consul having gone to Teanum in the Campania, his wife remarked that she would like to bathe in the baths reserved for men. And so, the quaestor caused all those in the bath to leave, and after a few moments of waiting, the consul's wife was permitted to bathe herself; but she complained to her husband of the delay she had met with, and also of the unfitness of these baths. Thereupon, the consul ordered that M. Marius, the most distinguished man of the city, be seized and beaten with rods in the public place, as being responsible for this unfitness of the baths. It is probable that the consul's wife had reported to her husband something rather grave, and what makes us think this, is the fact that the same consul, going to Ferentinum, informed himself also of the character of the public baths there, and was so dissatisfied with these baths that he caused the quaestors of this little city, in which men dishonored themselves under pretext of bathing, to be punished with the lash.

The baths of Rome were not slow in coming to resemble those which the Romans had found in Asia; they admitted of all sorts of lust and corruption, almost under the very eyes of the aedile, whose duty it was to see that manners were respected, but who only occupied himself with material ameliorations, designed at

once to soften and corrupt them the more. In the first place, the bath became a common place for the two sexes, and although each of these had their basin or their rubbing room apart, they might see each other, meet, speak together and form intrigues, arrange rendezvous and multiply their adulteries. Each brought there his slaves, male or female, eunuchs or *spadones*, in order to take care of his clothes, depilate him, scrape him, perfume him, rub him down, shave him and do his hair. This melange of the sexes had certain inevitable consequences for Prostitution and debauchery. The masters of the baths had, also, slaves trained for all sorts of service, miserable agents of immorality, who hired themselves to the public for different purposes. In the beginning, the baths were so somber that men and women might bathe side by side without recognizing each other except by their voices; but soon, the light of day was permitted to enter from all sides and to play over the marble columns and the stucco walls. "In this bath of Scipio," says Seneca, "there were breathing spaces rather than windows, which permitted only enough light not to outrage modesty; but today, it is said the baths are caves, if they are not sufficiently open to receive the rays of the sun through great windows." This indecent illumination revealed nudity to the eyes of all and cast a splendor over the thousand forms of physical beauty. In addition to the great rubbing room (*sudatorium*), in addition to the great *piscinae* of cold, tepid and hot water, in which one bathed, pell-mell, and upon leaving which one put one's self into the hands of slaves, *balneatores* and *aliptes*, the establishment contained a great number of halls for eating and drinking and a great number of cells in which one found beds for repose, as well as women and boys. Ammianus Marcellinus shows us, in the form of an energetic picture, the debauchees of the court of Domitian, surrounding the public baths and crying out in a terrible voice: "Where are they? Where are they?" Then, if they perceive some unknown meretrix, some old prostitute cast off by the plebs of the suburbs, some ancient she-wolf, with a body worn with fornication, they all hurl themselves on her at

once and treat this poor wretch like a Semiramis: *Si apparuisse subito compererint meretricem, aut oppidinae quondam prostibulum plebis, vel meritorii corporis veterem lupam, certatim concurrunt*, etc. The aediles saw to it that no scandals took place in the baths, which had a guard of soldiers outside, and which permitted all sorts of disorders to occur inside, without noise, without uproar or trouble of any kind. Prostitution put on, thus, a decent and a mysterious air.

The public baths were much like the lutanars; their interior organization varied, according to the sort of public which frequented them. There were gratuitous baths for the lower class; there were cheap baths, where the entrance fee was not more than a quadrans, two liards in our money; there were also magnificent baths where the aristocracy and the rich, even though the latter were freed men, met upon a footing of equality. All the baths opened at the same hour, the ninth, that is to say, about three hours after midday; at this hour, the public places, wine shops, inns and lutanars also opened. All the baths were closed at the same hour, also, at sunset: *tempus lavandi*, one reads in Vitruvius, *a meridiano ad vesperam est constitutum*. The lutanars alone remained open all night. The reign of legal Prostitution, beginning in full day, was prolonged to the following morning. As to Prostitution in the baths, it was merely tolerated, and the aedile pretended, so far as possible, to ignore it, so long as it did not assume a public character. The emperors came to the aid of the aediles in an attempt to obviate the horrible excesses which were committed in all the baths of Rome to which the two sexes were admitted. Adrian rigorously forbade this shameful mixture of men and women; he ordered that their baths be wholly separated: *Lavacra pro sexibus separavit*, says Spartianus. Marcus Aurelius and Alexander Severus renewed these edicts in favor of public morality; but in the interval between these two reigns, the execrable Heliogabalus had authorized the two sexes to meet in the baths. The servants, male and female, of the baths became, at need, the wretched instruments of recreation to both

sexes, who came there to seek such recreation. Matrons did not blush to have themselves massaged, anointed and rubbed by immodest bath attendants. Juvenal, in his famous satire on Women, represents a mother of a family, who waits for night to take herself to the baths with her equipment of pomades and perfumes. She finds her pleasure in sweating with great emotion, as her tired arms fall under the vigorous hand of the masseur, while the latter, animated by this exercise, causes the organ of pleasure to vibrate under his fingers (*callidus et cristae digitos impressit aliptes*) and the loins of the matron to crack. One of the commentators of Juvenal, Rigatius, explains to us the indecent processes of these aliptes, with a significance which is, happily, clear in the Latin: *unctor sciebat dominam suam hujusmodi titillatoine et contrectation gaudere.* He then asks himself, as candidly as can be imagined, if this attendant was not an infamous fox.

The aedile saw nothing of all this, so long as no one complained. The baths were free asylums of love, and of the most unclean pleasures as well. "Whereas outside," says the *Ars Amoris* of Ovid, "the guardian of the young girl watches over her habits, the baths, on the other hand, surely conceal her furtive amours (*celent furtivos balnea tuta jocos*)."<sup>1</sup> The women must have been more interested than the men in preserving these privileges attached to the public baths; for some, it was neutral ground, a center, a tutelary shelter, where they might without danger satisfy their senses; for the others, it was a perpetual market in which Prostitution was always for sale or purchase. Although the baths must have been closed at night, they remained open secretly, for privileged debauchees; outside, all was dark, while inside, all was light, and the baths, the suppers and the orgies went on always, almost without interruption. The trade of lenocinium was practiced on a vast scale in these places, and many came, under pretext of bathing, to speculate on the virginity of a young girl or a child, without seeking for themselves the benefit of that atrocious Prostitution. The habit of taking baths

developed among persons of both sexes, who had resorted with a sort of passion to the most debasing instincts and tastes; gazing upon their own nudity and that of others, revealed in the most obscene postures and reveling as they felt themselves pressed and touched by the trembling hands of the attendants, they contracted, insensibly, a rage for new and unknown pleasures, to the pursuit of which they dedicated their entire lives; they consumed themselves leisurely in the midst of this impure Capua of the public baths. It was there that Lesbian love had established its sanctuary, and Roman sensuality improved upon the libertinism of the companions of Sappho. These latter were always known as Lesbians, although they added nothing to the precepts of the feminine philosopher of Lesbos; but they took the name of *fellatrices*, when they reserved for men those ignoble caresses with which their mouths did not fear to soil themselves. This was not all: these women taught their execrable art to children and slaves, known as *fellatores*. This impurity became so widespread at Rome that one satirist exclaimed with horror: "Oh noble descendants of the goddess Venus, you soon will not be able to find any lips that are chaste enough to address your prayers to her!" Martial, in his epigrams, comes back incessantly to this abomination, which provided a living for a throng of infamous ones, but which did not keep the aedile from sleeping; we should not dare to translate the scorching epigram which he addresses to one of these vile beings, named Blattara; but it will be easier to quote one a little more decent respecting Thais, a fellatrice, who was then in the mode. "There is no one among the people, nor in all the city, who can boast of having had the favors of Thais, although many have desired her, although many have purchased them. Why then is Thais so chaste? It is because her mouth is not." (*Tam casta est, rogo, Thais? immo fellat.*) Martial does not pardon the execrable fellatores whom he finds upon his path; he detests and curses them all in the person of Zoilus: "You say that the poets and the advocates smell bad in the mouth; but that fellator, Zoilus, stinks even more!" This in-

famous and imaginative manifestation of lust was, under the emperors, so widespread at Rome that Plautus and Terence, who allude to the vice of the fellatores, seem by comparison to have nothing to say about it, and in the *Atellanae*\* where the pantomime suppresses the greatest temerities of the dialogue, the authors constantly express, by means of a mute play, the shameful mysteries of the art of the fellator.

Surely, the aediles must have been blind in the presence of these horrible debaucheries, which took place under their eyes! It was not even Prostitution, properly so-called; these were but its preludes or accessories; it was, above all, the most characteristic act of slavery, this act known as *praebere os*, according to the usual expression to be met with even in the *Adelphi* of Terence; and the aediles did not concern themselves with the individual conduct of slaves, except in what concerned the meretrices. It is a remarkable fact that these ignoble artisans of debauchery were almost never a part of the registered *college* of courtezans. One did not meet them, therefore, in the luponars, but in the wine shops and in all the suspect places where one went to eat, drink, gamble or sleep. Whoever entered one of these places, frequented by those who had lost all honor, found himself confused with them or degraded to their level, even though he himself was not abandoned to all their ordinary vices. The mere presence of a man or woman in a tavern (*popina*) was sufficient to subject this man or woman, in a manner, to every sort of outrage. Thus, the jurisconsult, Julius Paulus, speaks of them in these terms in the *Digest*: “Whoever shall make a plaything of my slave or my son, even with his consent, shall be looked upon as having done me a personal injury, as though my son or my slave had been led into a wine shop or caused to play a game of chance.” The injury and the damage existed from the moment the young

\*Of the *Atellana fabula*, or *Atellana*, Andrews (Latin-English Lexicon) has this to say: *A comic but not wanton kind of popular farce, that originated in in Atella, which, with the comedy borrowed from Greece, was highly relished at Rome, especially by the youth, and continued to be represented even to the time of the emperors.* Atella was an ancient town of the Osci in the Campania.

man had set foot in the wine shop, for he was never sure of leaving as pure, as chaste, as he had entered it.

The aedile's police kept a close watch over the wine shops, which had to be closed during the night and were not to be opened till daybreak; they might receive all sorts of people, without making any inquiry as to their guests, but they were not authorized to give the latter a lodging, and they were supposed to be emptied when the bell had sounded the hour of closing for the baths and all public places. This fact alone indicates the interior organization of a Roman *popina*, which consisted in general of a small low room, furnished with amphoras and great jars filled with wine, on the belly of which was to be read the year of vintage and the name of the growth; at the bottom of this room, humid and obscure, which received no daylight except through a door surmounted by a laurel crown, one or two very constricted chambers served for the reception of guests who remained to gamble and commit debauchery. There was no appearance of a bed, otherwise, in these holes, infected with the odor of wine and the smell of lamps. "The inns," says Cicero, in a passage which clearly establishes the difference between the *popina* and the *stabulum*, "the inns are his sleeping chambers, while the taverns are his dining rooms." In these places were to be found nothing but benches, stools and tables, which were not very favorable to ordinary Prostitution.

It was necessary to go into the *cauponae* and into the *diversoria*, in order to rent a room and a bed. The *diversorium* was destined only for the reception of travelers and of strangers, who passed the night there without supper; the *caupona* served, on the contrary, as inn and wine shop: one both lodged and supped there. Companions of both sexes were not lacking, for the proprietor of the place always had them in reserve for the use of his tenants. Prostitution in these transient houses had more decent attractions and less eccentric habits, and yet the aedile often came there to pay nocturnal visits, in order to hunt out women of an evil life who had evaded registration and those who had given themselves

to the practice of their trade beyond the lupanars. These women would flee, half naked, and hide themselves in the cellar, behind the amphoras of oil and wine; they would take hiding under the beds, when the apparitor of the aedile would knock at the door of the street, and when the lictors would lay down their fasces in front of the house. The object of these domiciliary visits was, above all, to punish infractions of the regulations by heavy fines; thus, as Seneca says, all the suspected places feared the justice of the aedile, and all these places were more or less devoted to Prostitution. Seneca, in his *Happy Life*, speaks with disgust of this shameful pleasure, low, trivial and miserable, which had for seat and asylum the somber vaults and the wine shops (*cui statio ac domicilium fornices et popinae sunt*). The aedile visited, also, the bakeries and the caves which were attached to them. In these caves, sometimes deep and separated from the public street, not only were there provisions of wheat in enormous vases of terra cotta, not only was there a mill turned by slaves; there were also subterranean cells, in which Prostitution took refuge during the day, at the hours when the lupanars were closed and inactive. "The meretrices, says Paulus Diaconus,\* dwelt ordinarily in the mills (*in molis meretrices versabantur*)."  
Pitiscus, who cites this passage, adds that the mills and the women were in caves communicating with the bakery, in such a manner that, it is evident, all those who entered there did not come to purchase bread; the majority came there with no other object than debauchery (*alios qui pro pane veniebant, alios qui pro luxuria turpitudine ibi festinabant*). This was a disorderly sort of Prostitution which the aedile did not fail to run down; he often descended into these subterranean cavities where the wheat was crushed by pounding or grinding, and he would always discover a throng of unregistered women; some employed in the service of the mills, others simple tenants of these dark holes, at the bottom of which debauchery

\*Also known as Warnefridi or Casinensis, the historian of the Lombards (about 720 to about 800 A. D.)

seemed to clothe itself in the shadows of its own proper ignominy.<sup>†</sup>

The lupanars were equally under the immediate surveillance of the aediles; but the latter were not at all concerned with what took place in them, provided there was no tumult, no brawl, no scandal within or without, provided the doors were open at the ninth hour, that is to say, at three hours after midday, and closed the following morning at the first hour. To the leno or the lena were, to so speak, dedicated a part of the duties of the aedile in the regime of the establishment. Since it was a business of the proprietor of either sex to keep a record of each of his women, it was on him, naturally, that the duty fell of verifying the registration of each one on the books of the aedile; he was responsible for an infraction of the law, when an ingenua or free woman citizen, when a married woman turned adulteress, when a girl in the power of her father or guardian or when an unfortunate child prostituted herself, of her own will or from force; for the Julian law included in the penalty for adultery all the accomplices who had aided it, even indirectly. The masters and entrepreneurs of the houses of ill fame had, therefore, frequently to account to the aedile, all the more for the reason that their trade respected nothing, neither birth, rank, age nor virtue. Every infraction of the rules gave rise to a fine, and fines of this nature, which the aedile inflicted at will, were payable at once. A delay in payment brought down upon the shoulders of the condemned one a liberal supply of lashes. This fustigation was executed in the open street, in front of the lupanar, and following it, the culprit, after having paid his fine, left the hands of the lictor in a bruised condition to seek the means of reimbursing himself in order to start a new traffic in Prostitution. Anything might be the occasion for reprimand or punishment. The proprietors of

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<sup>†</sup>If bakeshops in the *cinquecento* did not preserve still this character, we at least find Roman bakers and their wives still looked upon as rowdy persons and, as such, proper material for comedy. Cf., e.g., "Arcolano, a Baker (Fornaio)" and Togna, his wife, in Aretino's comedy, *La Cortigiana ("The Courtezan")*, *Works of Aretino*, translated by Putnam, Pascal Covici, Chicago, 1926.

the lupanar felt that they were too much at the discretion of the aedile to overlook the necessity of providing, in case of mischance, some favorable influence or support; they found this support among the debauched senators, for whom they reserved first pick among certain of their choice subjects. The aedile himself was not incorruptible, and the lenon knew by what sort of present one might sometimes win him over and get his favor.

It would be difficult to establish the nature of the infractions and violations which took place in the lupanars of Rome; it was undoubtedly not the aedile himself who performed the task of determining these; he was represented by subordinate officers. The latter would go to verify the management of the proprietors, to listen to and receive complaints which might be made against these latter, to examine the places and, above all, to revise on the premises the list of meretrices. The object of the legislator with regard to public debauchery appears to have been merely to prevent the Prostitution of patrician women and of free-born girls and to pursue the adulteress even under this infamous mask. To the lupanars might be admitted, under the guaranty of the law, only those women whom the law did not forbid to sell and prostitute themselves. Messalina, in practicing meretricium in a lupanar, passed herself off as Lysisca, a courtezan whose *nom de guerre* she had taken and who was probably carrying on her own trade elsewhere. Messalina thereby exposed herself, if not to being recognized, at least to being accused of the usurpation of the name and status of another, since only the women registered with the aedile had the right to practice in the lupanars. Seneca, in two different passages of his *Controversies*, speaks of the installation of a woman in a bad house, without indicating the various formalities which she was previously forced to undergo. "You have been given the name of meretrix," says Seneca. "You are seated in a public house; a signboard has been placed above your cell, and you give yourself to every comer." And elsewhere: "You are seated with the courtezans; you are also adorned to please the passersby, adorned in habits which the

lenon has furnished you; your name has been put above the door; you have received the price of your shame." It is certain that the lenon did not rent habits and a cell to all the women who presented themselves for public service; the latter were obliged, first of all, to establish their rank and even to produce a certificate of meretrix, called the licentia stupri. Another passage from the *Controversies* of Seneca gives us to understand that this certificate was delivered in the lupanar itself, and that the lenon kept a register on which were inscribed the names of his clients: "You have been led into a lupanar," says Seneca, "you have taken your place; you have made your price, and the signboard has been reversed in consequence. That is all which is to be known of you. Moreover, I prefer to be ignorant of what you call a cell and an obscene couch of repose." The delegates of the aedile made no scruple, at need, of demanding the most minute details and interrogating the meretrices themselves.

The aedile was especially severe with regard to infractions of the opening and closing hours of the lupanar; for these hours had been fixed in order that the youth might not go to these places of debauchery in the morning and there fatigue and enervate themselves, in place of pursuing their gymnastic exercies, their scholastic studies and those civic lessons which composed a Roman education. The legislator had also desired that the heat of the day might be an obstacle to Prostitution, and that those who were overcome by this heat might not be tempted to seek an excess of perspiration and lassitude in these places. There was no exception with regard to the hours assigned for the free practice of pleasure in these public places, except on the solemn fete days, when the people had been invited to the games of the Circus. On those days, Prostitution betook itself where the people were, and while the lupanars remained closed and deserted in the city, those of the Circus were opened at the same time as the games; and under the seats, packed with a throng of spectators, the lenons would set up little cells and tents where flowed from all sides a continual procession of courtezans and of libertines whom they

had attracted. While the tigers, lions and other ferocious beasts were gnawing the bars of their iron cages; while gladiators were combating and dying; while the crowd shook the immense edifice with its cries and hand clappings, the meretrices, in their own special seats and distinguishable by the height of their coiffure and their short, light and revealing vestment, were constantly appealing to the desires of the public and did not wait till the games had finished to satisfy those desires. These courtesans were constantly leaving their seats and following one another out during the whole length of the spectacle. The exterior porticoes of the Circus, being no longer sufficient for this incredible traffic in Prostitution, all the wine shops, all the hostleries in the neighborhood, belched with people. It is to be understood that on those days Prostitution was absolutely free, and that the apparitors of the aedile did not dare to make any inquiry as to the rank of the women who performed the function of meretrix. That is why Salvianus, in speaking of these great popular orgies, said: "They pay a cult to Minerva in the gymnasium, to Venus in the theater." And elsewhere: "All the immodesties there are are practised in the theaters; all the disorders in the palastra." Isidore of Seville, in his *Etymology*, goes still further by saying that the theater is synonymous with Prostitution for the reason that in the same place, after the games, the meretrices prostitute themselves publicly. (*Idem vero theatrum, idem et prostibulum, eo quod post ludos exactos meretrices ibi prosternerentur.*) The aediles, therefore, were not concerned with Prostitution in the theater, as though this Prostitution were a necessary part of the games given for the people. Generally, however (one might at least suppose so from a number of passages in the *History of Augustus*), the theaters were exploited by a species of women who lodged under the porticoes and in the galleries of these edifices; they had for lenons or for lovers the hucksters of the theaters, who were to be seen incessantly circulating from one row of seats to another during the performance; these hucksters did not limit themselves to selling to the people, or distributing to them gratis, at the expense of the

great person who was giving the games, supplies of water and chick peas;\* they served principally as messengers and interpreters between the parties to debauchery. It is, therefore, with reason that Tertullian calls the Circus and the theater the consistories of public lusts, *consistoria libidinum publicarum*.

It is probable that the aedile, despite his almost absolute authority over the public highway, did not disturb vagabond Prostitution; we see, in the poets and moralists who speak of this abject kind of Prostitution, no sign of any repressive or preventive measure. The aedile, undoubtedly, limited himself to seeing that the rules relative to costume were observed, and he severely punished the registered meretrices who had ventured into the streets with the long robe and bandelets of matrons; but he could not have kept a very close watch over the manner of the public highways, when night had covered these with an indulgent veil. The public way belonged to all the citizens; each one had a right there, and each one found protection there by placing himself under the safeguard of the people. It would, therefore, have been difficult to restrain a citizen from making use of his individual liberty in the open streets. Thus, the aedile, at the period of his greatest power, exercised no coercive action against the passers-by who soiled with their urine the exterior walls of houses and monuments. He had recourse, then, in the interest of the health of Rome, to the intervention of the god Aesculapius, and he painted two serpents on those walls which had been particularly devoted by custom to receiving these unclean deposits. These sacred serpents warded off misconduct which was not even abstained from in the presence of the aedile; in such case, care was taken not to commit a profanation, since the serpent was the emblem of the god of medicine. There was, unfortunately, no serpent which vagabond Prostitution had to fear under the vaults and in the obscure corners to which it fled, as soon as a street had become dark and less frequented. Pitiscus, who does not advance a fact without surrounding it with proofs drawn from the

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\*Cf. Horace, *Ars. Poetica*, 249: *fricti ciceris.....et nucis emptor.*

writings and monuments of antiquity, pictures for us the prostitutes of Rome, occupying by night the street corners and narrow streets of the city, calling to and attracting passers-by and conducting themselves with no more modesty than dogs: *Quos in triviis venereis nodis cohaerere scribit Lucretius.* The aedile could do no more than regulate the turpitudes which took place in the quarters of ill fame where decent folk never went, and which had for inhabitants only thieves, beggars, fugitive slaves and women of evil life. The police avoided disturbing these dregs of the population, and a theft, murder or a case of incendiaryism was necessary in order to cause the aedile's officers to descend into the depths of these resorts. The public highway, in the suburbs and within the wall of the city, was thus a nocturnal theater of these hideous impurities. It was there that Catullus met one evening that Lesbia, whom he loved better than himself, better than all he possessed; but if he recognized her, how changed she was, and what a horrible trade she was now practicing, under the impunity of darkness! He turned away indignant, his eyes clouded with tears and wishing he had seen nothing; then, this complaint was breathed from the heart of the poet:

*Illa Lesbia quam Catullus unam  
Plus quam se atque suos amavit omnes,  
Nunc in quadrivis et angiportis  
Glubit magnanimos Remi nepotes!*

If the aedile left in peace the wretched instigators of public immorality, he concerned himself still less with the conduct of their ordinary accomplices; he had, moreover, no censorship to exercise over manners, and he was careful not to offend the privileges of Roman citizens under the pretext of preserving modesty in the street. In this respect, he merely received complaints which were laid before him, in which case he would cite directly before his curule throne those who had given rise to these complaints. The complaints were sometimes very grave; for ex-

ample, when a mother of a family complained of having been insulted and treated as a courtezan, that is to say, followed and called after in the streets. The aedile then had to determine whether, by her costume, her gait or her bearing, the matron might have provoked the insult, in which case the one who perpetrated it might argue as to his own ignorance and good faith. As a general rule, the women who would have had a right to complain to the aedile's tribunal preferred to spare themselves the scandal of such a public appearance and not to appear in public in order to have the one who had insulted them condemned, especially if they felt that they themselves were to blame in the matter of their toilet; for a coiffure too high, a neck, shoulders or throat too nude was all that was necessary to justify such a provocation. "To call after and to pursue are two quite different things," says Ulpianus, Section XV, *De injuriis et famosis libellis*; "to call after is to offer an affront to the modesty of others by insinuating words; to pursue is to follow with insistence, but silently." When libertines were in doubt as to the quality of a woman whom they found in their path, and whom they desired, they did not speak to her at first but followed her until she had given sign by a wink of the eye that such pursuit was not insulting or disagreeable to her; they then felt authorized to make verbal propositions. One did not accost, in the open streets, a foreign woman, unless she had responded, by voice, look or gesture, to the first tentative appeal; and this custom remained fixed in the manners of Roman cities long after public corruption had relaxed the rigors of the law. "The woman who speaks publicly," says Prudentius, in his *Moral Quatrains*, "is directed to halt at the turn of the street." The meretrices alone were, in a manner of speaking, at the discretion of the first comer; each passer-by had the right to stop them in the street and demand a shameful compliance, as though this were a merchandise offered to anyone who was willing to pay for it at the fixed rate.

Beyond the case in which the *sextator*, out of libertinism or error, permitted himself to pursue or call after an ingenua whose

gait and dress did not justify such an approach, the quest of debauched pleasures was absolutely free to all men except the young. These latter alone might be punished by their father or their guardian; for the law permitted a renouncement of paternity in three cases, in which the father had the right not only to disinherit his son, but even to expel him from the family and to deprive him of his name: first, if the son had slept beyond the paternal walls; secondly, if he had given himself to infamous orgies; and lastly, if he had plunged into unclean pleasures. It was, then, the father, who, under certain circumstances, united the powers of the aedile and the censor in dealing with his debauched son. The guardian also shared the same authority with regard to his ward. But the young were not the only instigators to and sectatores of Prostitution; men of more advanced age, bearded and serious minded, were often to be found amid that impure throng which did not wait for night to fling themselves into debauchery. The aedile would often have blushed at the great names and noble characters which might have been found under the capes of these inmates of evil places! There were also many different categories among the immodest ones who formed the active army of Prostitution; some were called *adventores*, because they went to women and girls who seemed to them to offer an easy commerce; the others were called *venatores*, because they purchased, without having the money in their hands like the others, everything which promised them a new prey; *Alcinoi juventus* (youth of Alcinous) was the name given to those handsome effeminate who promenaded nonchalantly through the city in fete-day habit, curled, perfumed and adorned, ogling with their eyes, here and there, whatever might awaken their desires, exhausted by a night of excess. The *salaputii* were little fellows, very ardent, very lubricious, who did not look the part, but who had some reason for calling themselves the heirs of Hercules. The poet Horace boasted of being one of the best equipped in this line of succession, and the Emperor Augustus had nicknamed him on this account *putissimum penem*, which he himself trans-

lated by *homuncionem lepidissimum* (the funny little tip of a man)! The *semitarii* were a species of satyr, with wide shoulders, thick and muscular necks, robust arms, a timid look and a crafty air; they would set up their ambuscades at the crossroads, on the outskirts of the woods, in the middle of the fields, and there they would wait for the passing of some miserable prostitute; they would take possession of her by force, and, despite her cries and struggles, they always came off very cheaply. Since they addressed themselves only to women reputed to be common, the law regarding insults could not be applied to them. And the unfortunate victim, rising up bruised and dusty, found only laughs and quolibets waiting to console her for her misadventure. Finally, every married man who entered a lupanar became an adulterer (*adulter*); the one who frequented places of debauchery was a scortator; the one who lived familiarly with courtezans, who ate with them and dishonored himself by their company was called *moechus*. Cicero accuses Catiline of having formed a pretorian cohort of scortatores; the poet Lucilius says that a married man who commits an infidelity toward his wife incurs also the penalty of an adulterer, since he is an adulterer in name; and an old scholiast of Martial gives us to understand that the word *adulter* was applied to an adulterer by accident or occasion, whereas the word *moechus* expressed, especially, the habit, the normal state, of the adulterer. The Latin language loved diminutives as much as it did augmentatives; it had thus augmented the substantive *moechus* into *moechocinaedus*, which included in a single word several sorts of debauchery; it had at the same time sought the diminutive of the verb *moechor* by coining from it *moechisso*, which signified, very nearly, the same thing, with a little more delicacy. But the Greek language from which *moechus* had been taken possessed ten or a dozen different words, formed from the same source, to express the nuances and variations of *moicheno* and of *moichos*.

No man who preserved his self-respect repaired to places of Prostitution except with his face hidden and his head wrapped

in his mantle. No one had, moreover, the right to call him to account for the disguise which he saw fit to assume. Thus, when Heliogabalus went by night to visit the bad houses of Rome, he only entered them covered with the cape of a muleteer, in order not to be recognized: *Tectus cucullione mulionico, ne agnoscerit, ingressus*, says Lampridius. The aedile himself was not permitted to raise his hood, which would have indicated that he was the emperor; but he caused very rigorously to be observed, especially by day and on the public highways, the sumptuary ordinances which forbade to registered or breveted meretrices the use of the stole or long robe, bandelets for the head, purple tunics and even, at various times, embroideries and golden jewelry. These ordinances of the Senate were renewed by the emperors at various periods, but their application was sometimes softened or relaxed in the hands of the aediles, who did not punish equally all infractions. Thus, at the theater and the Circus, great courtezans were frequently to be seen clad like queens, gleaming with gold and precious stones; they did not readily submit to wearing yellow togas and tunics and flowered dalmatics. "Who wears flowered vestments?" asked Martial, "and who permits meretrices to affect the modesty of a matron clad in the stole?" A woman who vowed herself to Prostitution was shorn of the rank of matron and renounced the right to appear in public with the toga and the other insignia of decent women; her registration on the books of the aedile had rendered her unworthy of the long and flowing, so-called matronly, toga. Thus, Martial makes a jest upon the occasion of gifts being sent to a prostitute (*moecham*): "You give robes and scarlet, purple and violet to a famous courtezan! You want to give her the present she deserves? Send her a toga." The toga, in the beginning, had been common to the two sexes; but after the invasion of the republic by foreign women had necessitated the adoption of a garb peculiar to matrons, the latter had taken a stole, which fell in long folds to their ankles and which hid their throats so modestly that the form was barely to be described under the wool or linen.

The toga, or tunic without sleeves, remained the garb of men, and, at the same time, of women who had lost the privileges of their sex, along with the rights and honors reserved to matrons. Such was, probably, the principal rule of costume, which the aediles endeavored to enforce.

There were, moreover, many less important prohibitions and prescriptions concerning the dress of meretrices, but they were modified so often that it would be difficult to fix them in a general manner and to assign them to a certain epoch. The footgear and headgear of courtezans had been regulated like their clothing; nevertheless, the aedile was less rigorous with regard to these parts of the toilet. Matrons having been accorded the use of the sock (*soccus*), courtezans were not permitted to put it on, being obliged always to go with their feet naked in sandals and slippers (*crepida* and *solea*), which they bound over the ankle with gilded thongs. Tibullus takes pleasure in depicting the little foot of his mistress, compressed by the strap which imprisons it: *An-saque compressos colligat arcta pedes*. The nudity of feet among women was an indication of Prostitution, and the startling whiteness of their feet performed from afar the office of pimp, by attracting covetous glances. Sometimes, their sandals or their slippers were gilded all over. *Auro pedibus induito*, Pliny says, in speaking of this resplendent mark of dishonor. Sometimes, to imitate the color of gold, they were content with yellow slippers, although these originally had been the property of brides. "Wearing a yellow sock on her foot, which is white as snow," says Catullus. But brides were careful not to wear sandals or slippers, and the courtezans would not have dared to wear gold-colored socks.

Matrons also had adopted a coiffure which they did not permit to be usurped by the courtezans; this was a large white bandelet, which served, at once, as a support and ornament for the hair. This bandelet was probably, in the heroic days of Rome, a reminiscence of the ones which had adorned the heads of heifers and sheep offered as sacrifices to the divinity. The matron presented

herself in the guise of a victim at the altars of Modesty, as though to recall the fact that the cult of the generative gods, in remote times, had received as an offering the tribute of virginity. It was not courtesans but chaste women who arrogated to themselves the right to bind with the bandelets their smooth and brilliant hair; to virgins was permitted a simple bandelet, which made them recognizable, while the double bandelet remained the exclusive appanage of matrons. "Away!" cried Ovid, in the *Ars Amoris*, "away with those slender bandelets (*vittae tenues*), the sign of modesty! Away with the long tunic which covers half the feet!" This stole or long robe (*insista*), ordinarily bordered with purple at the bottom, was no less characteristic of a Roman matron than the bands which so graciously bound up her black hair and ringed tresses. Beyond these simple or double bandelets, the courtesans were free to adopt the coiffure which pleased them most. We have said that they were in the habit of wrapping their heads in a *palliolum*, a half mantle of cloth; but they were also in the habit of dropping a hood over their face, whereas the matrons showed themselves everywhere with faces uncovered and heads bare, to let it be understood that they had no cause for self-reproach, and that they did not blush to meet the glances of the public, which was their perpetual judge. These haughty Roman matrons, for a number of centuries, would have looked upon it as a dishonor to hide their hair, to powder it or alter its black hue; they did not even consent to divide it into tresses on the top of the head or over the temples, except for the purpose of distinguishing young and unmarried girls (*innuptae*), whose frizzed or curled hair had caused them to be nicknamed *cirratae*. The courtesans did not restrain themselves from copying the different kinds of coiffure adopted by the matrons and the *cirratae*, but they changed the aspect of it by means of varied nuances which they gave their locks; sometimes they would tint them a saffron color, sometimes they would redden them with the juice of the beet; sometimes they would make them a pastel blue, sometimes they would merely tone down the dark glow of their ebony hair,

rubbing it with perfumed ashes; then, after the emperors had created a sort of divine aureole for themselves by sprinkling powder of gold in their hair, the courtezans were the first to appropriate a mode which they regarded as belonging to themselves, and they would enthroned themselves, at the public fetes and solemn games, opposite the Caesars, their foreheads cinctured with a gilded headdress like the goddesses in the temples. But their divinity did not last for long, and powder of gold was forbidden them; whereupon, they replaced this powder with another, made out of dyer's weed, which shone less in the sun but which was easier on the eye. Those who had been seduced by a desire for blue-colored locks powdered their hair in turn with pulverized stone. "May all the tortures of Taenarus punish the senseless one who has caused your locks to lose their natural nuance!" cries Propertius, on the knees of his mistress. "Make me often happy, my Cynthia; by that you shall be beautiful and always beautiful enough in my eyes. When a foolish woman paints her face and hair blue, does she think that this rouge is an embellishment?" The aedile made war on gilded headdresses among the courtezans; but he did not restrain them from tinting their hair blue or yellow; he even encouraged it, for these were their distinctive colors (*caerulea* and *lutea*): blue, by allusion to the sea foam which had engendered Venus and to certain fishes which were born at the same time with her; yellow, by allusion to the gold which was the veritable god of their indecent industry.

The aediles would have had too much to do if they had had to determine, judge and punish all the sumptuary infractions which the meretrices permitted themselves; they closed their eyes on a number of petty offenses of this sort, which they pardoned on the ground of feminine coquetry. But in general, the registered women had no interest in passing themselves off as matrons, and they preferred to follow the foreign modes which were proper to them, and which drew from afar the attention of their clientele. And so it was, they preferred to wear vestments which did not even possess a name in the Roman tongue: *babylonici vestes* and

*sericae vestes.* *Babylonici vestes* was the name given to a sort of dalmatic which fell down over the ankles and was hooked in front, made of painted, variegated or flowered cloth, with embroideries and a thousand and one colors. The courtezans of Tyre and Babylon had brought to Rome this national costume, this ancient livery of Prostitution. *Sericae vestes* were the ample robes of silken tissue, so light and transparent that, according to the expression of an eye witness, they seemed to have been invented in order to render more visible that which they pretended to hide. The courtezans of India dressed themselves in no other fashion than this; and in the midst of their gauze, one might behold them absolutely naked. "Vestments of silk," exclaims with indignation the chaste author of the *Treatise on Benefits*, "vestments of silk, if one may call them vestments, which leave no part of the body protected by modesty, clad in which a woman would find it hard to swear that she was not naked; vestments which one would say had been invented in order that our matrons might not have any more to show their adulterous companions in the bedroom than they showed them in public!" Seneca was particularly averse to this Asiatic mode, for he comes back to it in his *Controversies*: "A miserable troop of servant maids is greatly grieved that this adulteress displays her nudity under a diaphanous gauze, and that a husband knows no better than the first stranger who comes along the secret charms of his wife!" The Babylonian robes, although more decent than the tissues of Tyre, which a Latin poet compares to a vapor (*ventus textilis*), were more generally adopted by the meretrices; for one had to be very sure of one's hidden perfections in order to make a complete show of them. This immodest exhibition, in any case, had to fear no reprimands on the part of the aedile, and the women, registered or not, who permitted themselves this airy costume did not pride themselves on aping matrons. It was the same with those who clad themselves in the Babylonian manners, with Oriental dalmatics, which a decent person would have blushed to wear in public, and which were made up in most resplendent and lively col-

ors. "Painted stuffs, made at Babylon," says Martial, "and embroidered by the needle of Semiramis."

The courtesans who submitted themselves docilely to the professional toga added to it the *amiculum*, a short mantle made of two pieces stitched at the bottom and attached over the left shoulder with a button or a clasp, leaving a couple of openings for the arms. This amiculum, a gallant word equivalent to *little friend*, did not fall over the figure; it had almost the same appearance as the chlamyde of the men; it was the exclusive property of women of an evil life. Isidore of Seville, in his *Etymologies*, assures us that the destination of this vestment was so well known that a matron taken in adultery was forced to assume it, so that this amiculum might attract to her a part of the opprobrium which had been reflected on the Roman stole. This little mantle, which was called *cyclas* in Greek, and which had never appeared indecent to Greek women, was undoubtedly brought to Rome by the hetairai, who gave it their own infamy. The color of the amiculum appears to have been white, since this vestment was of linen; as to the toga worn above it, it was almost always green, this color being that of Priapus, the god of gardens. The commentators have had much to say about the nuance of this green: some have made it pale, others a deep green; the latter attributed to it a gilded reflection, the former a yellowish shade. However this may have been, this green (*galbanus*) had been taken up by libertines of both sexes to such a degree that the latter were known by the nickname of *galbanati*, that is, clad in green; the epithet of *galbani* was applied to dissolute manners; *galbana* was the name given to a fine satin stuff of pale green color. Vopiscus portrays for us a debauchee, clad in a scarlet chlamyde and a green tunic with long sleeves. Juvenal shows us another clad in blue and green (*caerulea indutus scutulata aut galbana rasa*). Finally, there was such an affinity between the color green and the one who wore it that *galbanatus* had become a synonym for *giton* or *mignon*.\*

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\*Green appears to have been always a favored color with the species.

All the foreign modes belonged, by right, to the courtezans, who had lost the title of female citizens, and who, moreover, came, for the most part, from foreign countries. Their coiffure on state occasions—for the hood or *cucullus* only served them of an evening or in the morning, going or coming from the lupanar—the coiffure which they wore, by preference, to the theater and public ceremonies, where their presence was tolerated—this coiffure, which long had been their particular property, was sufficient evidence that Prostitution had begun in the Orient and that Rome had left it its national costume. Three kinds of coiffure or headdress were distinguished as belonging especially to the meretrices of Rome: the mitre, the tiara and the nimbus. The nimbus appears to have been of Egyptian origin; it was a band of cloth more or less large, bound about the forehead to diminish its height. The Romans, following the example of the Greeks, did not admire high foreheads in their women, and the latter sought to dissimulate their own, which were more elevated and prominent than the foreheads of Greek women; the nimbus, or frontal bandeau, was sometimes laden with golden ornaments, and its two ends hung down from each side of the head like the bandelets over the breasts of a sphinx. The mitre came, evidently, from Asia Minor, from Chaldea or from Phrygia, according to whether it was more or less conic in shape. The tiara came from Judea and Persia. This tiara, made of brilliant-colored cloth, had the form of a cylinder and resembled the pointed domes of Indian temples; the mitre, on the contrary, affected the form of a cone, and sometimes that of a casque or shell. Such was the Phrygian mitre, which painters attributed by tradition to the shepherd Paris, judging the three goddesses and giving the apple to Venus. These mythologic memories justified well enough the adoption of this curved bonnet as the emblem of free choice and pleasure. As to the pyramidal mitre, it had two pendants like the nimbus, with a border around the forehead; after having been the ensign of the ancient kings of Persia and Assyria, it still crowned, with an immodest royalty, the courtezans of Rome,

who reigned, mitred or adorned with nimbi (*nimbatae* and *mitratae*) at the performances in the theater and at the games of the Circus, without paying any fine to censor or aedile. Later, the name of this haughty coiffure became for them a soubriquet of contempt.

But the aediles, who suffered the meretrices to go clad, coiffed and shod like the queens of Tyre and Nineveh, still took a hand with those who had no litter or other species of conveyance. Matrons alone had the right to be carried in vehicles, by horses or slaves, and they were very jealous of this privilege. In the first centuries of Rome, they made use of a large cart, the invention of which was attributed to Carmenta, the mother of Evandu, and since this conveyance, a sort of closed chariot mounted on wheels, was of great service to corpulent ladies incapable of walking, its inventress was deified and given the task of presiding over accouchements. The Romans, at that time, did not tolerate ease and luxury, even among their women, and the Senate forbade the use of Carmenta's conveyances. The women, especially those who were pregnant, protested against this rather rigorous action of the Senate and formed a pact among themselves, swearing that they would decline their conjugal duties and would refuse to bear children for the fatherland until this order had been annulled. They repulsed their husbands so impitiously that the latter besought the Senate to repeal the unfortunate law which had deprived them of their wives. The women, satisfied with their triumph, did honor for it to the goddess Carmenta, and erected a temple to her on the side of the Capitoline hill. After this memorable event, of which Graevius has preserved a number of versions in his *Roman Antiquities*, the matrons were left in possession of their vehicles, which, however, had lost their wheels and which, in placing rolling over an unequal pavement, were now gently borne by men or horses. These vehicles were of two sorts, the *basterna* and the litter (*lectica*); the first, a stretcher borne by two gentle-paced mules, formed a sort of suspended cabinet, enclosed with glass: "An excellent precaution," says

the poet who furnishes this description, “in order that the chaste matron, going through the streets, may not be profaned by the glances of passers-by.” The litter, also covered and enclosed, was borne on the shoulders of men. Of this there were two forms and two sizes, from the chair, *sella*, which could accommodate one person, to the *octophoron*, which swayed on the backs of eight bearers. In the one, the woman was seated; in the other, she was couched on cushions, and she had often at her side two or three traveling companions. Luxury took possession of these litters, as it did of everything which tended to render life soft and voluptuous: the litters were painted, gilded without and upholstered within with furs and silken stuffs. It was then that the courtezans desired to appropriate them for their own use.

They succeeded for a moment, but the aedile merely relaxed his severity in admitting a few exceptions, accorded to rich and favored ones. Under a number of emperors, famous meretrices were to be seen in litters. These privileged ones were not satisfied with the closed litter, which passed silently through the streets, giving no glimpse of the one within. This mode of transportation had to be given other perfections: the interior became a veritable sleeping chamber and, according to the expressions of one commentator, they were but perambulating lupanars. There were, moreover, open litters with curtains, into the folds of which the eye of the passer-by plunged with desire. Sometimes the curtains of leather or cloth were drawn, but the occupant would lift up the corner in order to see and be seen. The relaxation of manners had multiplied the number of litters at Rome, and, at the same time, the advantages which elegant Prostitution found in them. The matrons themselves were no longer astonished at being confused with the courtezans. “Then our women, the Roman matrons,” tristfully remarks Seneca, “were exposed in their vehicles as though on the auction block!” Some sought adventure in this manner; others went to keep rendezvous. The litter would stop at a corner of a public place or in a side street; the bearers would set it down and stand guard about it; yet the portieres were

half open, and some fine youth had entered the inviolable sanctuary. One never knew whether the litter were empty or occupied. The courtesans, moreover, set an example for the matrons; one no longer recognized the latter by their closed carriages; they were to be seen everywhere in the open chair, *in patente sella*, as Seneca says. A scholiast of Juvenal shows his imagination rather than his ability as a critic when he advances the theory that the women who prostituted themselves in these conveyances were called *sellariae*, in opposition to the *cellariae*, who were the inmates of the cells in the lupanars. Juvenal does not even say that one entered Chione's chair, when one felt a passing caprice to do so; he says on the contrary: "You hesitate to make the beautiful Chione descend from her chair!" But Pierre Schoeffer, in his treatise, *De re vehiculari*, is of the opinion that, under certain circumstances, the conveyance was transformed into a portable house of Prostitution. It was, undoubtedly, for this reason that Domitian forbade the use of the litter, not only to registered meretrices, but to all women branded with infamy (*probosis feminis*).

The aediles had still other prohibitions to enforce with regard to these women; for it is certain that at different epochs the purple and gold were forbidden them. But police regulations were of little avail against the tenacity of a sex which loves the toilet, and which with difficulty supports coquettish deprivations. A number of antiquarians would have it that there was a law at Rome by which the use of gold ornaments and precious stuffs was absolutely forbidden to women of evil life, except in the interior of places of debauchery and in the exercise of their trade behind closed doors. If this law existed, it was not long in effect, or, at least, it was the object of frequent violations, for the poets frequently picture to us the courtesans clad in purple and adorned with jewels. Ovid, in his *Remedia Amoris*, appears to have forgotten the sumptuary laws in describing the toilet of a courtesan, or at least of a woman of pleasure: "Precious stones and gold cover her from head to foot, so that her beauty is the least part

of her worth." Plautus, in one of his comedies, puts on the stage a "gilded" meretrix, but he seems to imply that this was a new thing at Rome: *Sed vestita, aurata, ornata, ut lepide! ut concinne! ut nove!* Juvenal paints for us a courtezan of the hostelry, her bare head covered with a nimbus of gold (*quae nudis longum ostendit cervicibus aurum*); and yet, he is evidently alluding to the privilege which matrons had of being the only ones to wear precious stones and ear buckles, in that verse in which he says that a woman who has emeralds at her throat and pearls in her ears permits herself everything and blushes at nothing:

*Nil non permittit mulier, sibi turpe putat nil,  
Cum virides gemmas collo circumdedit et cum  
Auribus externis magnos commisit elenchos.*

Apuleius confirms this evidence of Juvenal: "The gold of her jewels, the gold of her vestments, here filed, there worked, announced at once that she was a matron." We know, nevertheless, that the Oppian law had forbidden the use of purple for all women, reserving it for the men. Nero renewed this prohibition, which was not definitely removed till the reign of Aurelius; but it had always existed for the courtezans and for those women reputed to be infamous, according to the opinion of an Italian scholar, Santinelli, who has not taken into consideration the fact that the ancients had several shades of purple and that one of these, the most brilliant, was the sign of power. The plebeian purple, or violet, was certainly not included under these prohibitory laws, which the emperors of the Orient restrained, by emphasizing them, to the imperial purple (*purpura*). Ferrarius, in his treatise, *De re vestiaria*, in order to reconcile these contradictory authorities, assumes that the courtezans had permission to wear gold and purple even in public, provided the purple was not in the form of borders on their vestments, and provided that the gold did not take the form of bandelets for their hair. It would be better to assume that the sumptuary regulations rela-

tive to courtezans underwent frequent variations, depending now on the Senate, now on the emperor and now on the aedile, and that the influence of one of these sovereigns of a day, or rather, of one of their lovers, was all that was needed to cause the abandonment of ancient customs which would have possessed the force of law under other more honorable influences. At Rome, as in all the cities where Prostitution was submitted to police ordinances, the women of evil life, although tolerated and authorized, were a butt for rigorous measures which often resembled persecution, but which always had for object the repression of excesses and the correction of abuses in public manners.

## CHAPTER XIX

THERE was at Rome a form of Prostitution which certainly did not depend in any manner on the aediles, so long as it did not usurp the prerogatives of the matrons with regard to vestments. This was what one might call voluptuous and opulent Prostitution, what the Latin tongue characterized as *good* (*bonum meretricium*). The women who took part in this Prostitution were also called “good” meretrices (*bonae mulieres*) in order to indicate perfection in kind; these courtezans, the fact is, might have been registered on the books of the aedile as foreign women, as freed women or as musicians, but they possessed no analogy with the unfortunate slaves of public incontinence; one never met them at the ninth hour of the day, their heads wrapped in the *palliolum* or hidden under a hood, scurrying to the lupanar or seeking adventures; one never surprised them, in the streets or at the street corners, in a flagrant nocturnal debauch; one never found them in the hostleries, the taverns, the public baths, the bakeries and other suspect places; although they were branded with infamy like the others, one never blushed at being seen in public with them or of announcing himself as their lover, for most of them possessed privileged lovers, *amasii* or *amaci*, and these lovers were, in a manner, the more or less brilliant cloaks which hid their mercenary amours. These formed the aristocracy of Prostitution; and, just as in Greece, they exercised at Rome an immense influence over modes, manners and the arts, over letters and all the circumstances of patrician life. But in no case did they possess any sway over politics or the affairs of state; they never mingled, like the Greek hetairai, in public business or government; they lived, always, beyond the confines of the forum and the Senate; they were content with the influence given them by their beauty and spirit in the little world of gal-

lantry, a perfumed, elegant and corrupt world, of which Ovid gives us the code in his *Ars Amoris*, and which had for poet-historiographers Propertius, Catullus and a throng of erotic writers, whom antiquity out of modesty appears to have condemned to oblivion.

These courtezans of renown came to resemble the hetairai at Athens the more Rome came to resemble the city of Minerva; and the more nearly the Roman character approached the Athenian. But the descendants of Evander were too proud of their origin and of the majestic title of Roman citizen to accord to women, to foreign and infamous women, however amiable they might be, a cult of admiration and respect. A courtezan who desired to take, or who had taken, authority over a senator, over a magistrate or a military chief, would have brought dishonor on the one submitted to this shameful dependence, to this ridiculous conquest. The gravest men of the State, the most austere, did not deprive themselves of the pleasure of frequenting courtezans and mingling in their intimate mysteries; Cicero himself supped at the house of Cytheris, who had been a slave girl before being freed by Eutrapelus, and who became the favorite mistress of the triumvar Antonius. But these constant relations between the courtezans and the most considerable personages of the republic remained, ordinarily, circumscribed by the interior of a house of pleasure or a villa, where the curious eye of the people never penetrated. In the streets, on the promenade, at the circus and in the theatre, if courtezans in the mode, the *precious* and the *famous* ones (*famosae* and *preciosae*), appeared surrounded by a compact throng of admirers (*amatores*), these latter were young debauchees who thereby brought shame on their families; they were freed men whose ill-gotten riches had not freed them from the stain of slavery; they were artists, poets and comedians who deliberately defied public opinion; or they were lenons in disguise, who naturally were seeking the most propitious occasions for traffic and lucre. Thus, among the Romans, the most triumphant courtezan never saw about her any but persons of ill fame,

except at the suppers and *commesationes*, where she sometimes succeeded in collecting the first citizens of Rome, who, behind closed doors, abused the privileges of private life.

It was necessary to go of an evening into the Via Sacra, that daily rendezvous of lust, debauchery and pride, in order to perceive how numerous and how brilliant was that army of courtesans in the mode, who occupied Rome like a conquered city, and who had there more captives and victims to their credit than the Gauls of Brennus had made. They came there every day for a tournament of coquetry, of the toilet and of insolence, with the matrons whom they eclipsed with their charms and their attire. Sometimes they were borne by robust Abyssinians in uncovered litters, where they reclined indolently, half nude, a mirror of polished silver in their hands, their arms laden with bracelets, their fingers with rings, their heads bowed beneath the weight of their earrings, their nimbi and their golden ornaments; by their side, pretty slave girls kept the air cool with fans of peacock feathers; before and behind the litters walked eunuchs and children, flute players and dwarf buffoons, who made up their cortége. Sometimes, seated upright in their light chariots, they themselves directed their swift horses and sought to pass one another as though they were running a race. Sometimes, they went mounted on fine coursers, which they rode with as much address as audacity, or on pretty Spanish mules, which a negro led by the bridle. Those who were not so rich, so ambitious or so turbulent, went on foot, all elegantly clad in variegated garments of wool or silk, all coiffured with art, their matted hair forming blond or gilded diadems, interlaced with pearls and jewels; some played with crystal or amber balls in order to keep their hands fresh and white; others bore parasols, mirrors, fans, when they did not have slaves to bear these objects for them; but each possessed at least one servant maid, who followed or accompanied her, as an indispensable emissary. These courtesans, it may be seen, were not all on the same footing of fortune and distinction, but they were alike in this one point, that they did not

figure on the books of the aediles and that they found themselves, thus, exempt from police regulations relative to Prostitution; for they did not have a fixed price, a *nom de guerre* that was registered and recognized, in a word, the right to practice their trade in the public lupanars. They were careful not to seek from the aedile the degrading *licentia stupri*, but they vowed themselves to Prostitution just as though they had obtained the license. They were never disturbed in this respect, at least so long as they did not insult too openly the jurisdiction of the aedile, by giving themselves without choice (*sine delectu*) in the public places to works of venal debauchery.

These facile meretrices abounded on the Via Scara and, if one is to believe Propertius, they did not go far away to give satisfaction to one who had given a signal to them. "Oh! how well I love," he says in his elegy, "that freed woman who goes with her robe half open, without fear of any Argus or any jealous eyes; who treads incessantly, with her dirty buskins, the pavement of the Via Sacra, and who does not wait if one shows any sign of going to her! Never does she raise any difference, never does she demand indiscreetly of you all the silver which an avaricious father frequently regrets having given to his son; she will never say to you: 'I am afraid; hurry up, I beg you!' (*Nec dicit: Timeo! propera jam surgere, quaeso!*)" This streetwalker of the Via Sacra, it may be seen, gained her livelihood in the light of day, without being any too much concerned with the aedile and the police laws. Propertius even seems to indicate that she barely took the precaution of leaving the Via Sacra, which began at the Amphitheatre, and led to the Coliseum, running alongside the temple of Peace and the place of the Caesars. There were in the environs of the Coliseum enough groves, sacred or otherwise, in which wandering love might meet only with statues and boundary posts, which proved no disturbance. Otherwise, the baths, the inns, the wine shops, the bakeries and the barber shops always offered open asylum to anonymous Prostitution, of which the Via Sacra was the general rendezvous. Ma-

trons came there also, the majority of them in litters or carriages, especially at certain periods when they had obtained the exclusive privileges of chairs and litters (*sellae* and *lecticae*): they did not affect, at this period of an unheard-of corruption, a bearing much more decent than that of the professional courtezan; they reclined, like the latter, on silken cushions, in a costume which did not render less immodest the bandelets of their coiffure and the purple of their stoles with long flowing folds, as they went surrounded by slaves and eunuchs, bearing fans for chasing away the flies and sticks for parting the crowd. These matrons, these heirs to the greatest names of Rome, these wives, these mothers of families, to whom the law bowed in veneration, had soon forgotten, under the emperors, the chaste and austere virtues of their ancestors. Those who appeared in the Via Sacra to display there the pomp of their toilets and the splendor of their cortege frequently had in view the choosing of a lover, or, rather, of a vile and shameful auxiliary to their lubricity. "Their old and ugly servant maids," says M. Walkenaer in his fine *History of the Life of Horace*, "complacently withdrew at the approach of young effeminatees (*effeminati*), whose fingers were laden with rings, the toga always elegantly draped, their hair combed and perfumed, the face spotted with those little patches, by means of which our ladies of the last century sought to render their physiognomies more piquant. There were to be seen also, in these same places, men of athletic build, who appeared to display with pride their muscular strength; their rapid and martial stride offered a complete contrast to the composed air, the slow and measured steps of the young lad with hair carefully curled, and cheeks rouged, darting lascivious looks to one side and the other. These two species of promenaders were, most frequently, gladiators and slaves; but certain women of high rank chose their lovers from these low classes, whereas their young and pretty attendants kept themselves pure against attack by men of their own station, yielding only to the seductions of knights and senators."

We have reported in its entirety this picturesque fragment, the details of which have been taken by the learned academician from the pages of Martial, Aulus Gellius, Cicero, Seneca and Horace; but we regret the absence of many details of manners which Juvenal, the implacable Juvenal, would have been able to add to this picture of the promenades of Rome. "Noble or plebeian," cries Juvenal, in his terrible satire against the Women, "all are equally depraved. She who trails the mud of the pavement is no better than the matron, borne on the heads of those great Syrians. To show herself at the games, Ogulnia rents a toilet, a cortege, a litter, a cushion, servant maids, a nurse and a young girl with blond hair, whose duty it is to take orders for her. Poor girl, she spends on beardless athletes what remains of the money of her fathers; she gives them the last she has. . . . There are some who are charmed only by the impotent eunuchs and their soft caresses; for thus they have no abortions to provide for." The satires of Juvenal and of Persius are filled with horrible prostitutions which the Roman ladies permitted themselves almost publicly, the heroes of which were infamous actors, vile slaves, shameful eunuchs and atrocious gladiators. Juvenal draws a frightful portrait of Sergius, the favorite of Hippia, wife of a senator: "The poor Sergius had already commenced to shave his throat (that is to say, he had attained the age of forty-five years) and having lost an arm he was in a fair way to go into a retreat. Moreover, his face was covered with deformities; there was an enormous wen which, sinking down under his helmet, fell over the middle of his nose; his eyes were small and blood-shot and distilled incessantly a corrosive humor. But he was a gladiator; under that title these fellows became Hyacinths, and Hippia preferred him to her children, to her country, to her sister and to her husband, for it is a sword that women love." We see in Petronius the abominable role which the *obscene gladiator* plays; but only the Latin is sufficiently daring to express all the mysteries of Roman debauchery. "There are women," says Petronius elsewhere, "who like to take their

loves in the mud, and whose senses are only awakened at the sight of a slave or of a valet with a deformed foot. Others go insane over a gladiator, a dusty mule driver, or an actor who displays his graces on the stage. My mistress is of this number; she frequents the seats of the senators, the fourteen benches of knights, and goes to seek at the top of the amphitheatre the object of her plebeian fires."

The Via Sacra, the porticos, the Via Appia and all the promenade places of Rome were, then, frequented by the miserable agents of matronly prostitution, as well as by courtezans and women of easy manners; by the odious retainers of Venus Aversa, as well as by libertines of all schools and all ranks. But we must recognize the fact, in the presence of this variety of children and depraved men who made a show of their turpitude, that the courtezans seemed almost decent and respectable by comparison; the latter were not, moreover, as numerous or as brazen as these impure hypocrites, as these unclean gitons, as these immodest spadones, as these effeminate of all ages who, curled, adorned, oiled and rouged like women, waited only for a sign or a signal in order to lend themselves to the most execrable traffic. The lenons, male and female, did not fail to lie in wait there, prompt and docile, for all bargains and negotiations. They did not limit themselves to carrying messages and love letters; they acted as the direct intermediaries in fixing a price, in designating a place of rendezvous, in removing obstacles opposed to an interview and in furnishing a disguise, a night cape, a room, a litter, all that lovers might need. At each instant, an old woman would approach a fine patrician and slip him, secretly, some ivory tablets, on the wax of which the stylus had engraved a name, a word, a message: it was a courtezan making approaches to a proud and noble descendant of the Catos and the Scipios. Suddenly, a Nubian would go touch the shoulder of a mignon, remarkable for his large earrings and his long hair; it was an old debauched senator, appealing thus to this man metamorphosed into a woman. Then, a robust water porter who hap-

pened to be passing was desired by two great dames who had remarked him simultaneously, and who were disputing as to who should be the first to sacrifice their honor to this fellow. "If the gallant failed them," says Juvenal, "they called their slaves; if the slaves were not sufficient they sent for the water porter (*veniet conductus aquarius*)."<sup>1</sup> A gesture, a look, a word, and gladiator, eunuch, child, would present himself and recoil before no species of service. And the aedile, what was the aedile doing while Rome was dishonoring herself thus in the face of Heaven by the vices of her leading inhabitants? And the censor, what was the censor doing while public manners were losing all appearance of modesty? Censor and aedile could do nothing where the law was silent, as though it were afraid of having too much to say. *Permitted or licit pleasures* was the name given in pagan Rome to everything which Christianity rejected as being in the realm of forbidden pleasures. It is, therefore, jokingly that Plautus causes one of the characters in his *Curculio* to say: "Provided you abstain from the married woman, from the widow, from the virgin, from youth and free-born children, love whatever you please!" Catullus, in the wedding hymn of Julia and of Manlius, shows us marriage as a moral bridle on these shameful habits. "It is understood," says the poet of physical love, "that you, perfumed bridegroom, renounce with regret your mignons (*glabris*); though we know that you have never made the acquaintance of any but permitted pleasures; but those pleasures a husband can permit himself no longer (*scimus haec tibi, quae licent sola cognita, sed marito ista non eadem licent*)."<sup>2</sup> There was, therefore, nothing but philosophy which could combat the outbreaks of this ignoble license, a license which found no restraint in Roman legislation.

Part of the intrigues and communications which took place on the public highway were carried on by means of signs. It is a known fact that pantomime was an art very refined and highly complicated, which was especially studied in the theatre, and which was perfected in accordance with the use which was to be

made of it. Hence the marvelous talent of courtezans in what constituted the mute language of the meretricium. There were also different dialects in this amorous pantomime. Sometimes, the most eloquent expression of this lascivious language would shine out or burst forth in a look. The eyes spoke all the better, in that an excellent view and a prodigious spontaneity of mind followed and even preceded the gleams of the eyeball. If the eye was not understood by the eye, the movements of the lips and the fingers served as a most intelligible means of communication, though a less decent one, between persons who would sometimes have blushed to make use of a word. Thus the sign generally adopted by those who followed the most infamous masculine debauchery, consisted in the raising of a finger at the base of which the other fingers of the hand dropped themselves into a fascicle in order to represent the shameful attribute of Priapus. Suetonius, in his *Life of Caligula*, pictures for us an Emperor who offers his hand to be kissed by giving it an obscene form and movement (*formatam commotamque in obsceneum modum*). Lampridius, in his *Life of Heliogabalus*, tells us that this monstrous debauchee never permitted an indecent word, even when the play of fingers indicated an infamy (*nec unquam verbis pepercit infamiam, quum digitis infamiam ostentaret*). These obscene gestures were executed with an astonishing rapidity which ordinarily escaped the gaze of the indifferent. One might suppose, from a number of passages in the *History of Augustus*, that the *signum infame* was not tolerated under all the emperors, and that the most celebrated for their vices had affixed a severe penalty to this sign, which gave to the middle finger the nickname of *infamous finger*. For the rest, the Athenians showed themselves no more indulgent with regard to this finger, which they named *catapylon*, and which they were ashamed to adorn with a ring. The *digitus medius* had been consigned to infamy in Greece because the villagers made use of it to know if their chickens had eggs in their bellies, which gave rise to the Greek word, *skimalizein*, invented expressly to qualify the act of these villagers. “Be

sure to mock, Sextillus," says Martial, "him who calls you ci-naede and offers you his middle finger." The presentation of this finger indicated, at once, a demand and a response, in the tacit language of these shameful debauchees. They had still another sign of intelligence, in which the middle finger changed its role: they would bring this finger to their head, either to the forehead or to the back of the head, pretending to scratch the head. "That which indicates the immodest one," says Seneca, in his fifty-second letter, "is his gait, is the movement of his hand, is his finger which he brings to his head, is the blinking of his eyes." Juvenal authorizes us to suppose that this scratching of the head with a finger had replaced, in the language of gesture, the elevation of the middle finger out of the closed hand. "Behold," he says, "behold flowing into Rome from all sides, in chariots, on vessels, all the effeminate who scratch their head with a single finger. (*Qui digito scalpunt uno caput*)."<sup>1</sup> But the courtezans preferred to speak with the eye rather than with the finger, and nothing could equal the eloquence, the persuasion and the attraction of their oblique gaze (*oculus limus*). The grave rhetorician Quintilian would like the orator to have, on certain occasions, gentle and voluptuous, oblique and, so to speak, amorous (*venerei*) glances. Apuleius, in his erotic romance, paints a courtezan who gives oblique and mordant glances of the eye (*limis atque morsicantibus oculis*). This was what the courtezans called *hunting with the eye* (*oculis venari*): "Do you see her," says the Soldier of Plautus, "do you see her hunting, on the run, with her eyes, and on the fly with her ears? (*Viden' tu illam oculis venaturam facere atque aucupium auribus?*)"

This mute language, which the courtezans everywhere excelled in speaking and in understanding, had become so familiar to all the women of Rome that these latter had no other for affairs of pleasure. An old Latin poet compares this rapid exchange of looks, gestures and signs between a preciosa and her lovers to a ball game, in which a good player tosses back one to another the balls which he receives with both hands. "She holds one." he

says, "and makes a sign to the other; her hand is occupied with this one, and she presses the foot of the other one; she puts her ring between her lips and shows it to one in order to call another; while she is singing to one, she addresses others by a movement of her finger." The great master of the art of love, Ovid, in his poem written on the knees of courtezans, and often under their dictation, has placed in the mouth of one of his muses these lessons in amorous pantomime: "Look at me," says that clever *gesticularia*, "regard the movements of my head, the expression of my face; remark and repeat after me these furtive signs (*furtivas notas*). I will convey to you, by a movement of my eyebrows, eloquent words, with which the voice has nothing to do; you shall read these words of my fingers as if they were written down there. When the pleasures of our love come to your mind, touch gently with your thumb your rosy cheeks; if there is in your heart some echo which speaks of me, raise your hand to the extremity of your ear. O light of my soul, when you approve of what I say or do, take your ring in your fingers. Touch the table with your hand, in the manner of those who make a vow, when you wish all the evils in the world to my cursed and jealous one." The poets are full of these tacit dialogues of lovers, and Tibullus, above all, praises the cleverness of his mistress in speaking by signs in the presence of an importunate witness, and in hiding tender words under an ingenious pantomime (*blandaque compositis abdere verba notis*). This universal language was all the more necessary at Rome for the reason that often one would not have been able to make one's self understood otherwise, since the majority of courtezans were foreign women and did not find it expedient to speak their native language in the midst of this population, which had been brought together from all the countries of the known universe. A great many of these women of pleasure, moreover, had received no education and would not have created a pleasant impression by disfiguring the Latin of Cicero and Virgil, even though, according to a Roman poet, love and pleasure commit no solecisms. There was also, in the customary language

of Rome, a singular reserve, which never permitted the employment of an obscene word or image. The writers, poets or prosateurs, even the gravest of them, made no pretense of adhering to this chastity of expression, as though the ear alone were wounded by what never offended the eyes. Yet they avoided, in the freest conversation, not only smutty words, but also combinations of words which might provoke a thought of indecent analogies. Cicero says that even if words do not smell bad, they affect disagreeably the hearing and the sight. "Everything that is good to do," according to the Latin proverb, "is not good to say. (*Tam bonum facere quam malum dicere*)."

The erotic Latin language was, nevertheless, very rich and highly perfected; it had taken from the Greek all that it might appropriate without prejudice to its own particular genius; it was incessantly developing and animating itself by lending itself to all the libidinous fantasies of the amorous poets; it repelled barbaric neologisms, and it proceeded rather by figures, by allusions and words of double sense, adopting into its vocabulary the vocabularies of war, shipping and agriculture. It had, moreover, but a small number of technical words, the majority of foreign derivation, which were proper to it, and it preferred to turn from their usual acceptation the most decent and usual words in order to mark them with its own seal by means of a trope which was often ingenious and poetic. But this language, which knew no reticences in the eulogies of Catullus, in the epigrams of Martial, in the histories of Suetonius, in the romances of Apuleius, was not really spoken except at meetings of debauchees and in connection with intimate mysteries. It is a remarkable fact that the courtezans, the least decent in their toilet and their manners, would have blushed to utter in public an indecent word. This modesty of language often prevented them from appearing to be what they were, and the poets, who ordinarily constituted their court, might, therefore, imagine that they were dealing with virgins. The tender little names exchanged between lovers and their mistresses were not less conventional,

less chaste or less innocent when the mistress was a courtezan and the lover an erotic poet. The latter would call her his rose, his queen, his goddess, his dove, the light of his life, his star; she would respond to these gentle terms by calling him her jewel (*bacciballum*), her honey, her sparrow (*passer*), her ambrosia, the light of her eyes (*oculissimus*) and her pleasure (*amoenitas*); she never made use of her licentious interjections, but only of I love you! (*amabo*),\* a frequent exclamation which summed up a whole life, a whole vocation. As soon as intimate relations has been established between persons of opposite sex, they called each other *brother* and *sister*. This habit was general among all courtezans, the humblest as well as the proudest. "Who keeps you from choosing a sister?" says one of the heroines of Petronius; and, moreover, it is one man who says to another: "I give you my *brother*." Sometimes, in designating a mistress whom one had had, one referred to her as his *sister of the left side* (*laeva soror*, says Plautus), and a courtezan gave the waggish name of *little brother* to whomsoever had had dealings with her.

We should not be too much astonished at this decency and even prudery of spoken language, as contrasted with the perpetual immodesty of gestures and the audacity of deeds. Hence, this expression, which occurs at every possible excuse in the common speech in the form of a proverb: *Respect the ears* (*parcite auribus*). As to the eyes, they were spared nothing, and scandalized by nothing which they saw. They felt no repugnance at pausing over the pages of one of these obscene books, these erotic or Sotadic† writings, in verse or in prose, which the libertines of Rome loved to read during the night (*pagina nocturna*, is Martial's phrase). This was a species of literature highly cultivated among the Romans, although little to the taste of decent folk. The authors of this literature, dear to courtezans, appeared to be animated by the desire to win for themselves, by their works, a name at the feasts of debauchery and to honor thereby the im-

\*The tense of the original is, of course, future.

†From Sotades of Maronea (about 280 B. C.), noted for his licentiousness.

modest gods to whom they had consecrated themselves. But it was not only professional libertines who composed these lubricious books (*molles libri*); sometimes the poets, the most esteemed writers, permitted themselves to be drawn into this profligacy of imagination and abuse of talent; it was usually on their part a sort of offering made to Venus; it was, in certain cases, a simple literary sport, a sacrifice to the tastes of the day. "Pliny, who is generally esteemed," says Ausonius (in the *Cento Nuptialis*), "has made certain lascivious poems, although his manners have never furnished material for censorship." The miscellany of Sulpitia breathes a voluptuous pleasure, and yet this worthy matron did not often make sport of herself. Apuleius, whose life was that of a sage, appears all too amorous in his epigrams; severity reigns in all his precepts, license reigns in his letters to Coerellia. The *Symposium* of Plato contains poems which one would say had been composed in houses of ill fame (*In ephebos*). What shall I say of the *Erotopaegnion* of the old poet, Laevius, of the satiric verses (*fescenninos*) of Aen-nius? Must one cite Evenus, whom Menander has nicknamed *the Wise*? Must one cite Menander himself and all the comic authors? Their manner of life is austere, their works are wag-gish. And Virgil, who was called Parthian on account of his chastity, has he not described, in the eighth book of his *Aeneid* the loves of Venus and Vulcan with an indecent modesty? Has he not, in the third book of his *Georgics*, joined together, as indecently as possible, men who have been changed into beasts?" Pliny, in order to excuse himself for a mental debauch for which he does not appear to feel much self-reproach, said: "My book is obscene, my life is pure (*lasciva est nobis pagina, vita proba*)."

The secret library of the courtezans and their friends must have been considerable, but the names of the principal authors who composed this library have barely come down to us. Among the Romans, as among the Greeks, it was the erotics who had to suffer most from the proscriptions of Christian morality. Poetry in vain demanded grace from them; vainly they sought refuge un-

der the enlightened and liberal protection of the learned amateurs of antiquity; vainly they were perpetuated from mouth to mouth in the memory of voluptuaries and gallant ladies; Christianity pursued them impitiously, even in the memory of tradition. They all disappeared and were effaced, with the exception of those who, like Martial and Catullus, had the happy privilege of being protected by their poetic reputation. Religious scruples even went so far as to tear out many of the pages in the works of the best writers. Latin letters thus lost the majority of the poets of pagan love, and this systematic destruction was the work of the Fathers of the Church. We no longer possess anything of Proculus who, according to Ovid, had followed in the footsteps of Callimachus; nothing of the orators, Hortensius and Servius Sulpitius, who made such beautiful and licentious verses; nothing of Sisenna, who had translated from the Greek the Milesian books (*Milesii libri*) of Aristides; nothing of Memonius or of Ticida, who, on the say-so of Ovid, were not more concerned with modesty in words than they were in actions; nothing of Sabellus, who had chanted the arcana of pleasure in the manner of the Greek poetess Elephantis; nothing of Cornificius, nor of Eubius, nor of the impudent Anser, nor of Porcius, nor of Aedituus, nor of all the eroticks who were the delight of courtezans and of the good meretrices of Rome. The new Christians did not forgive much to the Greeks, whom they understood still less, nor to the ignoble Sotades, who gave his name to poems inspired by a love contrary to nature; nor to Mimnermus of Smyrna, whose verses, Propertius tells us, were better love poems than those of Homer; nor to the impure Hemiteon of Sybaris, who had summed up the experience of his debauched friends in a poem called *Sybaritis*; nor to the brazen Nico, who had put into verse the acts of courtezans; nor to the celebrated Musaeus, whose lyre, the equal of that of Orpheus, had evoked all the venereal passions. Thus was annihilated, almost completely, the pantheon of Greek and Roman prostitution, after two or three centuries of persevering censure and of implacable proscription. The courtezans and the

libertines were less zealous than scholars in defending their favorite authors, for libertines and courtezans, becoming old, became at the same time devout and burned their books. It was scholars who preserved for us Horace, Catullus, Martial and Petronius.

## CHAPTER XX

THIS frightful mass of prostitutions of all sorts, in the mud of which Roman society wallowed, could not fail to corrupt the public health. Although poets, historians and even physicians of antiquity are silent on this subject, which they fear to present under a dishonorable light, although the evil consequences of what a writer of the thirteenth century calls impure love (*impura venus*) had left few traces in the satiric texts, as in those of *materia medica*, it is impossible not to recognize the fact that the depravation of manners among the Romans had multiplied the germs and increased the ravages of the maladies of Venus. These maladies were certainly very numerous, always very tenacious and frequently terrible, some of them. But they have been almost wholly neglected or at least cast into the shade by the Greek and Roman physicians and naturalists. We can merely hazard a few philosophic conjectures as to the causes of this oblivion and general silence. In the absence of any clear and formal indication in this respect, we are reduced to supposing that religious motives forbade the inclusion among ostensible maladies of those which affected the organs of generation and which had their origin in debauchery. The ancients did not wish to insult the gods, who had accorded to men the benefits of love, by accusing those same gods of having created an eternal poison with this eternal ambrosia. The ancients did not care to have Aesculapius, the inventor and the god of medicine, enter an overt contest with Venus by endeavoring to provide a remedy for the vengeances and chastisements of the goddess. In a word, the maladies of the sexual organs, little known and little studied in Greece as at Rome, were hidden and disguised, as though they branded with infamy those who were tainted with them, while

these latter secretly sought, with the aid of magicians and vendors of philtres, to cure themselves.

Venereal maladies were, undoubtedly, less frequent and less complicated among the Greeks than among the Romans, for the reason that prostitution was far from committing the same ravages at Athens that it did at Rome. There was not in Greece, as in the capital of the Roman world, a frightful promiscuity of all sexes, all ages and all nations. Greek libertinism, which took a certain prestige from the sentiment of ideal love, had not opened its arms, as Roman libertinism had, to all the foreign debaucheries; the former had preserved always, even in its greatest excesses, certain instincts of delicacy, whereas the second had abandoned itself to the grossest appetites and had pushed physical brutality to its extreme limits. We cannot doubt that grave accidents in the way of secret contagion had accompanied the invasion of Rome by *Asiatic lust*. It was about the year of Rome 568, or 187 years before Christ, that this Asiatic lust, as Saint Augustine calls it in his *City of God*, was imported to Italy by the proconsul Cneius Manlius, who had subjugated Gallo-Greece and conquered Antiochus the Great, King of Syria. Cneius Manlius, jealously eager to attain triumphal honors which had not yet been decreed him, had brought with him dancers, flute players, courtezans, eunuchs, effeminate and all the shameful auxiliaries of a debauchery which till then had been unknown to the Roman republic. The first fruits of this debauchery were, naturally, nameless maladies which attacked the organs of generation and which spread among the people, becoming more aggravated as they were complicated with each other. "Then," says Saint Augustine, "then alone did beds ornamented with gold and precious tapestries appear; then were musicians introduced at the feasts, and, along with them, many licentious perversities (*tunc, induc-tae in convivia psalteriae et aliae licentiosae nequitiae*).". These musicians came from Tyre, from Babylon and the cities of Syria, where, from time immemorial, the sources of life had been polluted by horrible maladies, born of impudicity. The books of

Moses bear witness to the existence of these maladies among the Jews, who had contracted them in Egypt, and who had found them even more redoubtable among the populations of the Promised Land. The Hebrews destroyed, almost completely, these Ammonite, Midianite, and Canaanite populations; but the latter, in disappearing, had left the Hebrews, as though by way of revenge, a hoard of impurities, which altered, at once, their manners and their blood stream. There was soon not a race in the world more vicious or more unhealthy than the Jewish race. The neighboring peoples of Judea, those ancient adherents of sacred prostitution, put, at least, more refinement and delicacy into their lustful outbreaks and, as a consequence, each better preserved its bodily health. All of Syria, nevertheless, it must be admitted, was but a permanent home of pestilence, leprosy, and the venereal evil (*lues venerea*). It was to this dangerous home that Rome went to seek new pleasures and new maladies. We have already sustained this thesis, which is by no means a paradox, and which science at need would support with solid bases, that vice against nature, which Moses, alone among the legislators before Christ, had branded with reprobation, did not exist and could not exist in a state of tolerance throughout all antiquity except as a result of frequent and continual perils which troubled the regular order of natural pleasures. Women were often unhealthy, and to approach them in certain circumstances, under diverse influences of temperament, season, locality and manner of life, brought consequences serious to the health of husbands or lovers. Women who were the healthiest and purest ceased to be so suddenly from inappreciable causes, which appeared to elude the precautions of hygiene as it did the remedies of medicine. The heat of the climate, physical improprieties, the menstrual indisposition of the feminine sex, the degenerative manifestations of that ordinary indisposition, the *fleurs blanches*, a succession of child beds and other accidental reasons produced local maladies which varied in symptoms and character according to the age, constitution, temperament and habits of life of the subject.

These foreign maladies, the origin of which remains almost unknown, and a radical cure for which was a long matter, very difficult and even impossible in some cases, surrounded with a sort of mistrust the most legitimate relations between the two sexes. Any inflammation, any infirmity, any weakening of the generative forces, was looked upon as an almost indelible stain. Evil fates, evil spirits and evil influences were blamed for those poisonous germs which lay hidden in the tenderest caresses of a loved woman, and these caresses, so desirable before one knew how perfidious and hostile they were, soon came to be feared in themselves. And so it was, fear and sometimes disgust drove away from commerce with women men whom experience had enlightened on the morbid phenomena attaching to this commerce; and so it was, a shameful disorder of the imagination had endeavored to change the physical laws of humanity and to deprive women of the privileges of their sex, transferring these privileges to debased and bastard beings, who consented to be of no sex by becoming the docile instruments of a hideous debauchery. It is true that other maladies of a species more repugnant and not less contagious had taken root among the population, along with the depraved taste which had given them birth, and which subjected them to incessant metamorphoses; but these maladies were less widespread than those of women, and undoubtedly, one might better guard against them. It is to be understood, also, that in all these mysterious maladies, leprosy, which was endemic throughout the Orient, took a part and showed itself under the most capricious, the most inexplicable forms.

The physicians of antiquity, we have every reason to believe, refused to treat the evils of one and the other Venus (*utraque Venus*), for the reason that these evils possessed in their eyes, as in those of the crowd, an air of divine malediction, appearing to be a scourge of infamy. The wretches who were tainted with them had recourse, then, in order to get rid of them, to religious practices, to the recipes of a vulgar empiricism, to shady works of magic. It was this, above all, which gave potency to the oc-

cult sciences and the art of philtres; this was, for the priests as well as for the magicians, a road to riches and reputation. This venereal contagion, which resulted inevitably from an impure commerce, was always looked upon as a celestial chastisement or as an infernal vengeance; the victim of the contagion, far from complaining and accusing the author of her misfortune, accused herself and sought in herself alone the reasons for this sad experience. Hence, the many offerings, hence the sacrifices in the temples; hence, many magical invocations in the depths of the woods; hence, the officious intervention of old women, of enchanters and all the subordinate charlatans who lived at the expense of prostitution. It is impossible to understand, otherwise, the silence of the Greek and Roman writers on the subject of the shameful maladies, which were formerly more frequent and more hideous than they are today. These maladies the physicians properly so called would not treat, except secretly, and those who were infected with them, men and women, never pleaded guilty to them, even when they came to die of them. Leprosy, moreover, that almost incurable affection, which transformed itself into an infinite number of forms, and which, in its various stages, offered the most diverse symptoms—leprosy served as a single explanation of all the venereal diseases; it was leprosy, also, which engendered, modified, augmented and denatured them and gave them essentially the appearance of a cutaneous affection. It is clear enough that leprosy and the venereal diseases, by being combined and confused, and by reciprocally inflaming each other, had ended by leaving an hereditary virus in the whole body of a nation. Thus, the great leprosy belongs traditionally to the Jewish people, the little leprosy, or the *mal de Venus (lues venerea)* to the Syrian people.

When this disease came to Rome, with the Syrians whom Cneius Manlius had transplanted there, as though to found in his own country a school of pleasure, Rome, already the victorious mistress of a good part of the world, Rome had no doctors. Doctors had not been tolerated in the interior of the city except under

exceptional circumstances, in times of pestilence and epidemic. But once the public health was out of danger, the Greek physicians who had been called in were dismissed with that disdain which the people of Romulus, in the period of their gross and savage independence, had evidenced for the arts which flourished in time of peace. The Romans, it is true, had led, up to that time, a rude, laborious, austere and frugal life; they did not know any other malady than death, according to the expression of an old poet, and their robust nature, early trained to fatigues and privations, did not fear any infirmities except those which were caused by wounds received in war. All the medicine of which they had need was comprised in the knowledge of certain vulnerary plants and in the practice of certain surgical operations. Their sobriety and their continence sheltered them from those evils which are the products of excess at table and of debauchery. Those whom an odious vice, familiar to the Fauns and to the aborigines, their ancestors, had stained with some hideous malady, were careful not to spread this malady, and died of it rather than seek a remedy and reveal their turpitude. Moreover, in times of innocence, or rather of modesty, all the diseases which attached to the shameful parts, whatever their diagnoses might be otherwise, were confounded under a single term, which bore witness to the horrors they inspired: *morbus indecens*. Thought and imagination avoided halting over the distinctive details of these different affections, which were designated in this manner. It is permitted, nevertheless, to indicate, if not to describe and appreciate, those which showed themselves the most frequently. There was the *marisca*, a cancerous tumor, having the size of a large fig, of which it bore the name, obstructing the womb or sometimes even bursting outside and propagating itself about the anus. When this tumor was not so large, it was called the *ficus* or ordinary fig; when it was composed of a number of small purulent excrescences, it was called *chia*, which was also the Greek name of the little wild fig. Among women, this disease frequently took the form of a more or less bitter excretion, some-

times bloody, always fetid, the generic name of which, *fluor*, demanded an epithet which the nature of the disease prescribed. But the *morbus indecens* presented few varieties, and after it had attainted a victim, or rather a guilty party, of one or the other sex, it did not seek to graft itself elsewhere and engender other species of impure fruits; the disease, left to itself, made incurable ravages and secretly devoured the victim, whose miserable state was only prolonged by baths and massages. It sometimes happened that, in the case of an energetic constitution, the disease appeared to yield to treatment and to disappear for a time; but it came back afterward with more tenacity and under more malignant forms. There was nothing, moreover, but empirical magic which dared to contend with the sad effects of the *morbus indecens*. The only doctors who were then at Rome were miserable slaves, Jews or Greeks, whose whole pharmacopoeia was composed of philtres, of talismans and religious practices; this medicine appeared to have been invented expressly for these maladies, which those who suffered from them readily attributed, in order to escape the shame of confessing the cause, to fate, to the malign influence of the stars and demons, to the vengeance of the gods and to the will of destiny.

We must not fail to remark that Greek medicine was established at Rome at almost the same time as Asiatic lust; this latter dates from the year of Rome 588; the former from the year 600 or thereabouts. Seventy years before, about 535, a few Greek physicians had endeavored to settle in the city, called there by different maladies which Roman austerity was unfitted to cope with. (We may presume that the *morbus indecens* was one of these chronic and inveterate maladies.) But they experienced so many insults, so many difficulties and so much repugnance that they abandoned this first attempt to settle there; they did not return until Rome was a little less proud of the health of its inhabitants. Good cheer and debauchery had, in the space of a few years, created, developed and multiplied a great number of maladies which had not been seen since the foundation of the

city. Among these maladies, the most common and the most varied were certainly those which debauchery had produced. They might always be traced back to certain confessed causes, or rather one avoided declaring the causes, while the physician was careful to cover them with a decent mantle, classifying them with respectable diseases. This is why these shameful maladies, in the medical works of antiquity, are not to be met with at all, or else are disguised under names which hid their infamy. It is in the immense and disgusting family of leprosy that we must seek for almost all the varieties of venereal diseases, which were not lacking to ancient prostitution any more than to modern. The majority of the physicians were slaves or freed men: "I am sending you a physician chosen from among my slaves," one reads in Suetonius (*Mitto tibi praeterea cum eo ex servis meis medicum*), and this passage, although diversely interpreted by commentators, proves that the physician was often no more than a simple slave in the house of a rich patrician. Each, therefore, might have his own doctor by buying him, undoubtedly at a very dear price; for the venal value of a slave depended on the kind of merit he possessed, and a clever physician, who might be, at the same time, an adroit surgeon and a learned apothecary, was paid for not less dearly than a musician or Greek philosopher. It is to be understood that the physician, having no other task than healing his master and the people of his house, practiced his art in a servile fashion and, from fear of the rod or ruder chastisements, surrounded with a prudent discretion the domestic maladies which it was his duty to cure, under pain of the cruelest punishment. The freed men physicians were not in a very free position regarding their patients; they did not fear being beaten or thrown into irons, in case their treatment met with little success, but they might be brought to justice and made to pay a considerable fine, if success had not crowned their efforts, and if their art had admitted itself to be impotent against the malady. It is evident that, in this delicate situation, the physician only treated maladies which he was practically sure of cur-

ing. This state of things indicates to us, clearly enough, that, in order to be sure of medical attention in the case of illness, it was necessary to have at least one physician among the slaves who constituted the personnel of the house, and this physician, who held the secrets of his master's health, was especially necessary to the latter when Venus or Priapus had suddenly become unfavorable or hostile.

This fact alone is, in our opinion, a sufficient explanation of the mystery which surrounded venereal diseases in antiquity, a mystery equally enforced by religion and public modesty. The Romans raised a temple to the Fever, a temple to the Cough; but they would have been afraid to bring shame on Venus, their divine ancestor, by establishing a cult to the maladies which dis honored their goddess. It is possible that they denied these maladies as an insult to humanity, and they did not even wish the *morbus indecens* to have a name in the annals of medicine and of the Roman republic. The existence of this evil, of the true syphilis, or at least of an analogous affection, is, however, only too well established in the medical *Treatise* of Celsus, who, nevertheless, did not dare to attribute it to an impure relation, and who avoided tracing it to its suspected origin. Celsus, the pupil or rather the contemporary of Asclepiades of Bithynia, the first celebrated physician who came from Greece to Rome, Celsus leaves us in no doubt as to the very characteristic presence of the venereal evil among the Romans, for he describes in his book, that admirable resumé of the medical knowledge of Augustus' century, a number of affections of the sexual parts, affections evidently venereal, which modern science has long been unwilling not to associate with identical phenomena of the syphilis in the fifteenth century. These affections are depicted with too much verity in the Latin work to permit us to entertain any doubt as to their contagious nature and their venereal transmission. We are dealing here with the *morbus indecens*, the *lues venera*, although Celsus does not assign these generic names, but rather, distinctive ones which he himself seems to have created for these

varieties of the obscene malady. The reflections with which Celsus preludes the long paragraph which he devotes to the maladies of the shameful parts, in the sixth book of his treatise on medicine, these reflections tend to conform our feeling with regard to the motives of reserve and convenience which opposed the public treatment of such maladies at Rome. "The Greeks," says Celsus, "in treating a subject like this, have more appropriate expressions and ones which, moreover, are accepted by usage, since they recur incessantly in the writings and the ordinary language of physicians. The Latin words are more offensive (*apud nos foediora verba*) and it cannot even be said in their favor that they are in common use in the mouths of decent persons. It is, then, a difficult undertaking to endeavor to respect propriety while following the precepts of the art. This consideration, however, has not restrained my pen, because, in the first place, I do not wish to leave incomplete the useful instructions which I have received, and because it is of importance to spread in the Vulgate the medical notions relative to the treatment of these maladies, which the victims never reveal to others of their own free will (*Dein, quia in vulgus eorum curatio etiam praecique cognoscenda, quae invitissimus quisque alteri ostendit.*)" Celsus thus excuses himself from publishing a form of treatment which had been looked upon as secret, and he appears to be animated by a desire to make it available to everyone (*in vulgus*) in order to obviate the terrible accidents which result from an ignorance of medicine and the neglect of the patient.

He passes in review those maladies, which one might find with all their special signs in the monographs on syphilis. He speaks, first of all, of an inflammation of the *membrum virile* (*inflammatio colis*), which produces such a swelling that the prepuce can no longer be drawn back; he prescribes abundant fomentations of hot water in order to detach the prepuce and soothing injections into the canal of the urethra; he recommends fastening the *membrum virile* to the abdomen in order to obviate the suffering caused by the tension of the prepuce, which sometimes, on being

removed, reveals dry or humid ulcers. "Ulcers of this sort," he says, "have need, above all, of frequent lotions of hot water; they should also be covered and kept from the effects of cold. The *membrum virile*, in certain cases, is so eaten away under the skin that glandular trouble results. It becomes necessary then to cut away the prepuce at the same time." He indicates as a means of curing the ulcers a preparation composed of pepper, saffron, myrrh, burned leather, and vitriolic minerals ground up together in an astringent wine. Have we not here a syphilitic gonorrhœa, accompanied by chancres and ulcerations? Celsus goes on to mention tubercles (*tuberculæ*), which the Greeks called *phymeta*, fungus excrescences which form about the gland and which it is necessary to cauterize with a red iron or caustics, powdering the slough with leather filings in order to prevent the return of this parasitic vegetation. Celsus, after having clearly presented these phenomena of venereal virus, pauses over certain exceptional cases, in which ulcers, the result of a vitiated blood stream, if not of a particular disposition on the part of the patient, produce a gangrene which attacks even the body of the *membrum virile*. It is necessary to practice incisions, to cut into the quick, remove the gangrened flesh and cauterize with powdered caustics, notably with a compound of chalk, chalcite and pimento. The patient who has undergone this frequently dangerous operation must have absolute rest and immobility until the scabs left by the cauterization shall have fallen away of themselves. Hemorrhage is to be feared, when it has been necessary to remove a part of the *membrum virile*. Celsus goes on to note a chancre (*cancri genus*), which the Greeks called *phage-claina*, a very malignant chancre, the treatment of which admits of no delay, and which must be burned with a red iron upon its first appearance; otherwise this phagedena eats away the *membrum virile*, deforms the gland, invades the canal and plunges even into the bladder; it is accompanied, in this case, by a latent and painless gangrene, which brings on death in spite of all the aids of the medical art. Is it possible to pretend that this species

of chancre was not the local index of syphilis of the most malign sort? Celsus merely cites, in passing, a sort of calloused tumor, insensible to the touch, which spreads over the whole of the *membrum virile*, and which demands to be excised with precaution. As to the carbuncle (*carbunculus*), which makes its appearance in the same place, it has need of being deterged by injections before being cauterized. Recourse may be had, after the excrescences have fallen away, to those liquid medications which are prepared for ulcers of the mouth.

In slow or spontaneous inflammations of the testicle, which are not the result of a blow (*sine ictu orta*), and which come, consequently, as the result of a venereal accident, Celsus advises bleeding of the foot, diet and the application of topic emollients. He gives the recipe for a number of these topics, to be used in case the testicle has become hard and has entered upon a state of chronic induration. Celsus takes great care to distinguish the swelling of the testicle produced from an internal cause from that which results from exterior violence, from compression or a blow. He approaches only with repugnance the maladies of the anus, which are, he says, very numerous and very importunate (*multa taediique plena mala*)! He distinguishes but three: the fissures, or rhagades, the condyloma and the hemorrhoids, which may frequently be of venereal origin. The fissures of the anus, which the Greeks call *rhagadia*, the shameful origin of which Celsus does not explain, were treated with plasters, into the preparation of which entered lead, a litharge of silver and turpentine. Sometimes the rhagades extended all the way to the intestine, and they were then filled with lint, soaked in the same antisyphilitic solution. Affections of this sort called for a gentle, simple and gelatinous alimentation, with complete repose and the frequent use of tepid hip baths. As to the condyloma, this excrescence came, ordinarily, from certain inflammations of the anus (*tubuerulum, quod ex quadam inflammatione nasci solet*), and it was necessary to treat it from the beginning in the same manner as the rhagades; after hip baths and solvent plasters, re-

course was had, in certain cases, to cauterization and to more energetic caustics; antimony, ceruse, alum and litharge were the ordinary ingredients of topics destined to destroy the condyloma, after the disappearance of which it was advisable to prolong the mild and soothing regime. Celsus, in advising analogous remedies against ulcerous and tuberculous hemorrhoids, lets it be understood that he frequently attributed them to a similar cause. He only speaks with much reserve of an accident which debauchery rendered all the more frequent and dangerous, the falling of the womb and the matrix (*si anus ipse vel os vulvae procidit*). He also avoids concerning himself with the shameful maladies which are equally met with in women, and, in closing, he barely indicates, in summary fashion, an ulcer resembling a mushroom (*fungo quoque simile*), which affects the anus and the matrix. He recommends fomenting this ulcer with tepid water in winter and with cold water in summer, powdering it with leather filings, with wax and chalk, and then employing cauterization, if the disease persists in spite of this first treatment. But it is evident Celsus does not dare, out of deference to the feminine sex, to assume that they are equally interested in these obscene maladies; he seems to feel that it would be an insult to depict them as exposed to inflammations, ulcers, tubercles and all the hideous ravages of the venereal evil.

And yet, the learned author of the *Manual of Venereal Maladies*, may be heard denying what is to be found in the work of Celsus and evidencing a blind obstinacy when he declares that: "In the whole of Celsus we do not find anything which leads us to suspect the existence of the syphilitic virus, but merely of local maladies, most often due to local and nonvirulent causes." He adds, after having summed up the program of Celsus respecting diseases of the genital parts: "It is, then, natural to conclude, with Astruc and Lamettrie, that all these pretended venereal diseases which we find mentioned in the ancients were nonsyphilitic maladies." Our own conclusion shall be entirely contradictory, and after having compared the descriptions of the Roman physi-

cians with those which modern observation offers us as the most exact and the most complete in the history of syphilis, after we have taken account of the objects of each of the forms of treatment prescribed by ancient and modern medicine, we shall have no doubt as to the origin and nature of the disease. Syphilis, the true syphilis, engendered by leprosy and debauchery, existed at Rome, as well as in the majority of countries where manners had been corrupted by the admixture of foreign populations. The last translator of Celsus, more enlightened or at least more impartial than his predecessors, informs us that the learned M. Littré has discovered certain manuscripts of the thirteenth century "in which all the affections of the genital parts noted by the ancients, and even those accidents which we regard as secondary, are formally assigned to impure coitus; and this, two centuries before the epoch commonly assigned to the invasion of the venereal malady."

This malady has made its appearance at Rome, under the redoubtable name of *elephantiasis*, about the year of Rome 650 (105 years before our era), and the elephantiasis, which soon infected Italy, gave strange forms to all the maladies with which it was complicated. Asclepiades of Bithynia owes, in part, his celebrity to this terrible affection, which he named the Protean evil, and which he excelled in curing, having observed it for long in Asia Minor. Also, according to the statement of Pliny, the Romans looked upon themselves as blessed by possessing in him a beneficent genius sent by the gods. Asclepiades, who had applied to medicine the philosophic system of Epicurus, saw in all diseases a failure of harmony between the atoms of which the human body appeared to him to be composed. He was the first to divide diseases into acute and chronic affections; he was the first to seek the causes of inflammation in a swelling of some sort; it is obvious that he had made a special study of the venereal diseases. A great advocate of dietetics, he frequently prescribed massages and hydro-therapeutic fomentations; he had thought of douches (*balmeae pensiles*) and, following the example of his

master Epicurus, he was not an enemy of sensual pleasures, provided they were followed with moderation. This Greek physician must have found success among the Romans, since he did not interfere too much with their native inclinations, permitting even to his patients a wise use of their physical faculties; this, he would say, was to keep their souls from going to sleep, since he believed the soul resided in the organs of the five senses.\* Like Asclepiades, the latter's favored disciple, T. Aufidius, recommended the use of massage in all maladies, treated successfully the leprosy and all the venereal degenerescences and included among his remedies flagellation and the pleasures of love, which he looked upon as a sovereign cure for melancholy.

Leprosy had become at Rome, as among the Jews, a chronic, permanent, hereditary malady; it found new force and prodigious aids in the abuse and disorders of the amorous pleasures; it was transformed and reproduced itself incessantly under the most afflicting aspects; it was surrounded with a frightful cortege of ulcers and cancerous protuberances; it only disappeared under the energetic action of medical remedies and surgical operations to reappear soon with more sinister symptoms and a more vital tenure of life. Musa, the physician to Augustus, whom he cured of a disease which historians have neither named nor described, an inflammatory and local malady, aggravated by warm baths—Musa appears to have devoted himself particularly to the study and treatment of the leprous, scrofulous and venereal diseases. He had been a slave before being freed by Augustus, and he must have been familiar with the secret affections which were ordinarily to be treated in families, grave and tenacious affections which attacked all parts of the organism after having taken birth in impure coitus. Musa invented a number of remedies for ulcers of an evil character; and these preparations, which preserved his name, after falling into empirical hands, were looked upon as infallible in the majority of venereal cases which Celsus

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\*In which he was not so far removed from certain artists and philosophers—e. g., Joseph Delteil (*Les Cinq sens*).

has described. Musa did not limit himself to exterior topics; he submitted the patient to an internal depurative treatment, ordering him to drink essences of lettuce and chicory. This treatment, which was not in use before his time, shows us clearly enough that he looked upon the venereal evil as a virus which mingled with the blood stream and the humors, inflaming and corrupting them. He treated with the same system all the diseases which he believed were derived, directly or indirectly, from this virus; ulcerations of the mouth, running of the ears, affections of the eyes; infirmities so common at Rome that they had become endemic there under the emperors. Meges of Sidon, who practiced at the same time as Musa, also won distinction in treating the leprous maladies which might often be venereal in nature. Meges was a pupil of Themison, who founded the Methodic School, and who, in order to achieve a cure for leprosy, had first investigated the causes, studied the symptoms and defined the principle.

This principle was, or had been, venereal in its origin. Leprosy, from whatever country it came, from Egypt or Judea, from Syria or Phoenicia, was, first of all, a local affection, born of impure relations, developed and aggravated by the lack of medical care, favored by accidental circumstances and transformed unceasingly, gradually or spontaneously, according to the age, temperament, habits of life and physical constitution of the patient. Hence, those varieties of leprosy which the Greek and Roman physicians seem to have avoided describing in their works, as though theory on the subject of this shameful malady inspired in them as much repugnance as practice. The first form of leprosy was therefore, in all probability, the true syphilis of the fifteenth century, and it is in elephantiasis that, in our opinion, we are able to recognize, at once, syphilis and this primary form of leprosy. Celsus barely speaks of elephantiasis: "almost unknown in Italy," he says, "but very widespread in certain countries." He undoubtedly had not observed it, or at least did not desire to devote much attention to a hideous malady, which he regarded as a rare exception. "This disease," he limits him-

self to saying, “affects the entire constitution until the very bones are altered. The surface of the body is covered with spots and numerous tumors, the red color of which assumes by degrees a blackish tint; the skin becomes uneven, thick or thin, hard or soft, and, as it were, squamous; there is an emaciation of the body and a swelling of the face, legs and feet. When the malady has lasted for some time (*ubi vetus morbus est*), the fingers and toes disappear, in a manner, under the effects of this swelling; then a slight fever makes its appearance, which is enough to carry off the patient, already burdened with so many woes. This description is pallid enough, incomplete enough after one left us by a contemporary of Celsus, an illustrious Greek physician, Areteus, of Cappadocia, who had probably studied the malady in Asia Minor, where it was so frequent and so terrible.

Following is a frightful description, which we have reduced by two-thirds, suppressing many of the poetical and metaphorical features which adds nothing to the truth and horror of the picture. We shall remark that, in our opinion, Areteus confuses with elephantiasis a number of maladies, such as *satyriasis* and *mentagra*, which, according to him, were but symptoms or special forms of elephantiasis. “There are,” he says, “a number of similarities between the elephant disease and the elephant itself, in the matter of appearance, color, and duration; but they are each unique in kind: the animal resembles no other animal, the disease no other disease. This malady has also been called: the *lion*, for the reason that it wrinkles the face of the patient like that of a lion; *satyriasis*, on account of the red color which breaks out on the cheeks and cheekbones of the patient, and, at the same time, because of the impudently amorous desires which torment the one who suffers with it; finally, the *disease of Hercules*, because there is none greater or stronger. This disease is, as a matter of fact, the most energetic in undermining the vigor of man and the most powerful in producing his death; it is equally hideous to view, redoubtable as the animal the name of which it bears and invincible as death itself; for it comes from the same

cause as death: the cooling of the natural warmth of the body. And yet, it forms without apparent signs; no alteration, no disfigurement attack the organism at first, show themselves upon the body or reveal the existence of a nascent disease; but this hidden fire, after having for a long time remained buried in the viscera, as in the shades of Tartarus, finally bursts forth and spreads itself over the outside only after it has invaded all the interior parts of the body.

"This deleterious fire begins, in the majority of patients, on the face, which becomes as shiny as a mirror; with others it begins with the elbows, the knees or the articulations of the hands and feet. From then on, these poor wretches are destined to perish, since the physician, from negligence or from ignorance, has not endeavored to combat the disease when it was still weak and mysterious. The disease increases; the breath of the patient is infected; the urine is thick, whitish and clouded like that of mares; the food is not digested and the chyle, formed by the bad action of these organs, is less adapted to nourishing the patient than to nourishing the malady itself, the seat of which is in the lower belly. Tuberosities begin to bud out, one after another; they are thick and knotty; the space between these unequal tumors is chapped, like the leather hide of an elephant; the veins are enlarged, not from a superabundance of blood, but from the thickness of the skin. The malady is not slow in manifesting itself otherwise: similar tuberosities appear over all the body; already the hair has begun to die and fall off; the head is bare, and what little hair remains turns white; the neck and the pubic regions are soon completely depilated; the skin of the head is then cut with deep slits or clefts, numerous and rigid. The face bristles with hard or pointed warts, sometimes white at the summit, green at the base; the tongue is covered with tubercles in the form of barley grains. When the malady manifests itself by a violent irruption, blotches invade the fingers, the knees and the neck. The cheekbones puff out and grow red; the eyes are cloudy and copper colored; the yellow eyebrows come together and con-

tract, being laden with large black or livid warts, in such a manner that the eyes appear to be veiled under deep curtains, which cross above the eyelids. This crossing of the eyebrows, this deformity, gives the human face the character of the lion and the elephant. The cheeks and the nose also present blackish excrescences; the lips are swollen, the lower lip being pendant and slobbering; the teeth are already blackened; the eyes are elongated, flabby and flaccid like those of an elephant; ulcers break out around them and exude a purulent secretion. The whole superficies of the body is furrowed with caloused wrinkles and even with black fissures, which desiccate it like leather: hence the name of the malady. Crevices also divide the heels and the soles of the feet to the middle of the toes. If the malady spreads, the tuberosities of the cheeks, neck, fingers and knees end in fetid and incurable ulcers; they rise one above another so that the latest ones appear to dominate and feed on the first. It even happens that the members die before the patient does, even to the point of dropping away from the body, which loses, thus, in succession, its nose, fingers, feet and entire hands, as well as the genital parts; for the disease does not kill the patient, thereby delivering him from a life of cruel and horrible torments, until after it has dismembered him."

When one compares this frightful picture with that which the physicians of the fifteenth century trace upon the appearance of syphilis in Europe, one cannot doubt that this same syphilis was known fifteen centuries before under the name of elephantiasis; one can doubt no less that leprosy, of whatever sort, had its source in an impure cohabitation. Such appears to have been the opinion of Raymond, the learned historian of Elephantiasis: "The economic laws established in the Orient," he says, "on the subject of gonorrhoeas, which were very common, and on the subject of intercourse with women prove that the maladies of the genital organs and the groins, which have so close a correspondence with each other, were really venereal." It is to the leprosy, it is to the spyhilitic malady, that one must attribute the hatred

and contempt which the Jews who were afflicted with it inspired everywhere, especially among the Romans. Leprosy and the venereal evil were, in reality, one, after they had been combined; nothing was more frequent than their invasion; but nothing also appeared more dishonorable and no one was willing to confess himself a victim, even when all the world was or had been. The position of physicians regarding these mysteries, which seemed to have been repugnant to them, must always have been a delicate and difficult one. They treated nothing else but the leprosy; they were incessantly inventing unguents, panaceas and antidotes against it, and lepers never showed themselves, at least until the disease had broken out on their faces and hands. We see Celsus pretending to cure these ulcers of the fingers with lotions of lycium or boiled oil; hence those fleshy excrescences called in Greek *pterugion*, which grew at the base of the nails, and which did not always yield to the employment of mineral caustics; hence that *oscedo* or pernicious abscess of the mouth; which Marcellus Empyricus, in the fourth century, naïvely described, without seeking its source, surrounding it, however, with syphilitic symptoms; hence another malady of the mouth, still more characteristic and widespread among the lower class of people, that class from which were recruited the wandering meretrices and the vile and complacent ones who indulged in the form of debauchery known as fellatio. This repellent malady was called *campanus morbus*, for the reason that Capua, that queen of lust and infamy, as Cicero calls her, (*domicilium superbiae, luxuriae et infamiae*) was accused of having spawned it. It is certain that the majority of the inhabitants of Capua bore upon their face the stigma of this shameful disease. Horace, in the story of his voyage to Brundusium, introduces Sarmentus, a freed man of Octavius and one of the latter's mignons; he represents him as laughing and joking over the *campanus morbus*, and over his own face, which the disease had disfigured (*campanum in morbum, in faciem per multa jocatus*). Sarmentus had, on his left cheek, a horrible scar, grimacingly evident under the hair of his beard (*at illi*

*foeda cicatrix setosam laevi frontem turpaverat oris).* One of the commentators of Horace, Cruquius, also has a commentary on the campanian evil, and he pictures it as a livid excrescence which bristles the lips and ends by obstructing the orifice of the mouth. Plautus leaves us in no doubt as to the nature of this excrescence when, in his *Trinummus*, he proclaims the infamy of the campanian race, which, he says, surpasses in patience the Syrians themselves (*Campas genus multo Syrorum jam antidit patientia*). Plautus had learned many odious and immodest mysteries in turning the mill wheel in a bakeshop of Umbria.

In the majority of the maladies of Venus, the tumors and the excrescences, which physicians considered as the disease itself, in place of seeing in them merely the local effects of a more occult malady, these serious symptoms ordinarily passed over into the chronic state, except in those sufficiently rare cases in which massages, vapor baths and refreshing beverages were enabled to weaken the venereal virus and gradually to destroy it. One never came out of a long and painful course of treatment without bearing with him the marks of the disease, not merely on the body but often on the face. Thus, following the ulcers of the mouth, the lips would swell up and become bloody and livid. This so disfigured the features of the face that *spinturnicum* was the name given to a woman who had been thus deformed, whose disgusting lip resembled the grimace of a harpy (*spinturnix*). The *fici*, *mariscae* and *chiae*, which were constantly produced in affections of the anus, resisted the iron and fire of a periodic treatment; the patient soon fell back into the hands of the operator. "From your depilated podex," says Juvenal, "the physician laughingly detaches chancrous tubercles (*podice levi caeduntur humidae, medico ridente, mariscae*)."<sup>1</sup> This shameful effect of debauchery was so multiplied, especially among the people, who neglected to care for themselves, and among whom the disease was perpetuated from father to son, that a superlative epithet, *ficosus*, *ficosissimus*, was invented to describe persons afflicted with these ulcers and tubercles. In the ode of the

*Priapees* may be seen the libertine with more *fici* than any other walking among the poets (*inter eruditos ficosissimus ambulat poetas*). Martial, in one of his epigrams entitled *De familia ficosa*, draws for us a frightful picture of this family, and, at the same time, of all his contemporaries: "The wife has figs, the husband has figs, the daughter has figs, as well as the son-in-law and the grandson. Neither the steward, the farmer, the journeyman or the laborer are exempt from these shameful ulcers. Young and old, all have figs and, the astonishing thing is, not one of their fields has fig trees." Purulent excretions and gonorrhoeas were not less frequent than tumors, which they preceded or accompanied; but physicians, at least in theory and in their writings, had failed to distinguish, among these inflammatory infections of the urethra and the vagina, those which were the result of impure relations. It may be supposed that these latter betrayed themselves by particular characteristics, notably by an ulcer which was called *rust* (*rubigo*). "The *rubigo*," says an ancient commentator on the *Georgics* of Virgil, "is properly, as Varro attests, a result of shameful pleasure and is also called an ulcer. This disease ordinarily comes from an abundance and superfluity of humors, known in Greek as *satyriasis*." It was the name of this ulcer which was applied to the *rust* on wheat, altered by humidity and moisture. The passage which we have cited from Servius, who relies upon the authority of Varro, is sufficient to establish an opinion inspired in us by an examination of the *satyriasis* of the ancients. This malady, so common with them, was none other than the acute *blennorrhœa* of our days. There was also a species of *satyriasis* produced ordinarily by venereal excesses, and especially by the dangerous stimulants which were employed as an aid to those excesses. "This *satyriasis*," says Coelius Aurelianus, "is a violent ardor of the senses (*vehemens veneris appetentia*); it draws its name from the properties of an herb which the Greeks called *satyrion*. Those who use this herb are provoked to the acts of Venus by erections of the genital parts. But there exist also preparations destined to

excite the senses to the venereal act. These preparations, known as satyrics, are bitter, exciting and funereal to the nerves." Coelius Aurelianus thus describes satyriasis, in accordance with the lessons he had received from his master, Themison, who had been the first to observe this malady, and who treated it by applications of leeches, which do not appear to have been employed before his time.

The bloody excretions, rusty and whitish in color, the losses and the flowers of leucorrhœa, afflicted so generally the women of Rome that they invoked Juno under the name of *Fluonia*, beseeching the goddess to free them from these disagreeable inconveniences, which were not always the result of childbed, and which frequently were to be traced to an impure germ. The women affected with these unhealthy excretions were known as *ancunnuentae*, a bizarre word which appears to have been formed from the obscene substantive, *cunnus*, rather than derived from the verb *cunire*, to soil one's diaper, as Festus assumes. These various maladies brought with them, almost always, a swelling of the inguinal glands and, from lack of care or proper regime, produced a separation of these glands. The aster was looked upon as an efficacious remedy against affections of the groins, and this plant was called *bubonium*, from the Greek *bubonion*. The name of the remedy was soon applied to the malady, or at least to its symptoms, and under this name of *bubon* all sorts of pustules, abscesses and ulcers which had their seat in the groins, were confused. We believe that we can make a verbal comparison which may be able to throw some light on the ordinary causes of this inguinal malady. The Romans had coined a verb *imbubinare*, meaning *to soil with impure blood*; this verb was used especially of women during their menstrual indisposition. The same expression was also used for all acrid excretions, and a celebrated verse in the fragments of old Lucilius compares two different stains which a debauchee of double purpose had encountered: *haec te imbubinat et contra te imbulbitat ille*. And yet, Jules Caesar Scaliger proposes to read *imbulbinat* in place of

*imbulbitat* and, consequently, without always rendering the play of words in Latin, to translate the passage thus: "She gives you buboes, and he, on the contrary, gives you tubercles."

We are astonished at not finding in the poets more allusions to a malady which must have been very widespread among the Romans, namely, excretions of the rectum, that infamous stain of ancient debauchery. In our opinion, one must look for a description, or at least for a treatise on this shameful malady, to the paragraph which Celsus has devoted to hemorrhoids. Out of modesty rather than out of ignorance, in the class of hemorrhoids had been included all the analogous excretions, whatever their cause or their nature. There can be no doubt of this, when we see Celsus prescribing, in certain cases, remedies for the hemorrhoidal flux and the tumors which accompany the employment of caustics and astringent plasters. We do not think that one should recognize the disease known as *clazomenae*, which savants have classified among affections of the anus. According to Pierrugues, these were fissures or tears in the womb, indicated by Celsus, and their nickname is derived from the city of Clazomene in Ionia, where abominable manners had rendered this affection almost general, although it was not concentrated in this dissolute city. We see, rather, in these *clazomenae* certain tuberculous fungi, which grew in the neighborhood of the public region, and we shall adopt the etymology proposed by Facciolati, *plazonenos*, broken or fractured. Moreover, there is a famous epigram of Ausonius, which enables us to see the true character of the *clazomenae*; "When you tear away the vegetation which makes your podex bristle, bathed in hot water, when you rub with pumice stone the *clazomenae* which grow out of your loins, I cannot see what is the true cause of your disease, if it is not that you have had the courage to take a double malady and that, a woman in the rear, you have remained a man in front." Such is the horrible epigram which the Abbe Jaubert, translator of Martial, has not dared to translate and which commentators do not appear to have understood:

*Sed quod et elixio plantaria podice velles  
Et teris incusas pumice clazomenas;  
Causa latet; bimarem nisi quod patientia morbum  
Appetit, et tergo foemina, pube vir es.*

For the rest, there was nothing surprising in the presence of the evil of the *clazomenae* at Rome; for Rome under the emperors was invaded by foreigners who brought there, undoubtedly, their maladies, as they did their manners. “I cannot suffer, O Romans,” cries Juvenal, “I cannot suffer Rome to become Greek; and yet this Achaean scum makes up but a small portion of the inhabitants of Rome. For a long time, the Oronte of Syria has flowed into the Tiber, and it has brought with it its language, its customs, its harps, its flutes, its drums and its courtezans, who prostitute themselves in the Circus. Go to, then, you who are inflamed at the sight of a barbaric she-wolf, coiffed in a painted mitre!” The poets and Latin writers have not failed to brand the foreign guests of Rome, who may be accused, above all, of having corrupted Roman manners by bringing to that city their own vices and national habits of debauchery. It was Phrygia, it was Sicily, it was Lesbos, it was the whole of Greece which had polluted the ancient Roman austerity. Lesbos taught the Romans all the turpitudes of Lesbian love; Phrygia sent them their effeminate (*Faemineus Phryx*, says Ausonius), those young slaves with long flowing locks, with great earrings, with long-sleeved tunics and with red and green buskins. Lacedaemonia, the proud Sparta, also sent a colony of gitons and of tribades; Juvenal pictures for us a Lacadaemonian infamy which has tormented, without plausible result, the imagination of scholiasts and translators: *Qui Lacedaemonium pytismate lubricat orbem*. Martial cites the feminine lutes invented by Leda and popularized by the licentious Lacedaemonia (*libidinosae Lacedaemonis palaestras*). And Sybaris, and Tarentum, and Marseilles! “Sybaris has taken possession of the seven hills!” murmurs Juvenal, who regrets always the Roman simplicity of the early

centuries; Sybaris, the queen of pleasures and of venereal maladies. Tarentum (*Molle Tarentum*, says Horace) was there at the same time, with its handsome lads, with their perfumed skins, their depilated members and their bodies nude under vestments of transparent stuff, as though they had been nymphs. Marseilles also presented her children, trained to debauchery, but who often devoted only a shameful hand to prostitution, as witness this passage from the comedy of Plautus: "Where are you, who wish to practice the manners of Marseilles? If you wish to lend me your hand (*si vis subigitare me*), the occasion is a good one." One might never reach an end in enumerating the cities in foreign lands which had been of most service in the depravation of Rome. We must not forget Capua and the Opicians; these latter, who peopled a part of the *Campania*, were degraded to such a point that their name was synonymous with the most humiliating prostitution. Ausonius made an epigram against Eunus Syriscus, *inguinum liguritor*, a past master in the art of the Opicians (*Opicus magister*). One is dismayed at the number of inveterate and mysterious maladies which must have existed in those low regions given over to the shameful pleasures.

There came from Greece as many physicians as courtezans; but these physicians, whom Roman prejudice pursued everywhere with a contempt which even reached the point of hatred, were less concerned with making radical cures than they were with gaining silver. They became rich rapidly, when their reputation had marked them out as the ones best fitted for a particular affection; but the public health, despite the progress of methodic medicine, showed no improvement. It is permissible to judge of this from the maladies which were given preferences in the studies of science. The preferred subject was always leprosy, with its numerous varieties. Each practicing physician of renown invented a new remedy against some local manifestation of this chronic pestilence, which mingled with all the other maladies. There were a multitude of eye salves for ocular infections, a multitude of topics for ulcers, of gargles for asthmas

and of plasters for tumors, which proves that affections more or less leprous and venereal in character had been propagated to an infinite degree. Next to Musa, the physician most in vogue was Vettius Valens, less known for his medical and surgical talents than for his clandestine relations with Messalina. He had, undoubtedly, thanks to his mistress, more than one occasion for making the acquaintance of the maladies of love. At the same time, another pupil of Themison was practicing at Rome; Meges of Sidon, especially was curing leprous tumors and treated with success the scrofulous swelling of the breast. He was eclipsed by his fellow disciple, Thessalus of Tralles, who possessed neither his colleague's wisdom nor experience, but who boasted of being the conqueror among ancient physicians (*iatronikes*). This Thessalus, whom Galen describes as a *fool* and an *ass*, had the audacity to pretend to perform sudden cures by using the most violent medicines in strong doses. He achieved, as a matter of fact, a few brilliant successes in the treatment of leprosy, ulcers and scrofulas. This treatment seems to have constituted all his medicine; for leprosy, which was prevalent everywhere, appears to have been the only malady. As the number of patients increased, Thessalus found it well, also, to increase the number of physicians, and although he asked only six months to make his pupils as clever as himself, behold the ones who came to listen to his lectures: cooks, butchers, tanners and other artisans renounced their trades in order to follow in the footsteps of Thessalus, who walked abroad accompanied by a cortege of fanatic disciples. Physicians could not fail, therefore, to sink in public esteem and in ability. The great affair was always the curing of leprosy. Soranus of Ephesus came to Rome under Trajan and brought with him various preparations of alopecia and other drugs. Moschiom, one of the rivals of Soranus, occupied himself particularly with the diseases of women and the study of the sexual parts; he treated the white flowers by energetic means, which stopped them on the spot.

Beside these methodic physicians, we see a throng of empirics,

antidotarians and drug vendors. They were still more condemned and abhorred than the physicians. Horace does not feel that he is offering them any insult, when he puts them on the same footing with jugglers, beggars, parasites and prostitutes (*ambubajarum collegia, pharmacopoleae*). These charlatans operated in the domain of those shameful maladies which offered a vast field for the use of their pharmacopoeia. Among the empirics, however, a number of learned botanists and a number of ingenious manipulators were to be distinguished. Under Tiberius, Menebrates, the inventor of the diachylon, composed plasters which were often efficacious against eruptions, tumors and scrofulas; Servilius Damocrates manufactured excellent emollient plasters; Asclepiades Pharmacion cured ulcers of a bad character. Appollonius of Pergamus cured asthma; Criton cured the leprosy; Andromachus, the inventor of the theriac, and Dioscorides, the author of a great and celebrated work on *materia medica*, appeared to have attached more importance to the bite of serpents than to venereal poisons, although the latter claimed far more victims.

The investigation and treatment of this poison interested the school of physicians known as pneumatists, who flourished at Rome during the second century of the modern era, and who included in their ranks Galen and Oribases. One of these physicians, Archigenes, succeeded in combating leprous affections and had recourse sometimes to castration in order to diminish the effects of the malady, which was certainly venereal in the cases in which he sacrificed the virility of his patient. He had thrown a happy light on ulcerations of the matrix. Another pneumatist, not less clever, Herodotus, showed himself a zealous partisan of sudorifics, which, according to him, disengaged the pneuma of anything heterogeneous it might contain; the employment of sudorifics was, undoubtedly, very effective in the case of maladies of syphilitic origin. These maladies began to be better observed and their medication became more rational. A contemporary of Galen, Leonidas of Alexandria, who seems to have been as for-

tunate as he was clever in his practice, won distinction in the treatment of the genital parts; his remarks on the ulcers and warts of these parts are still of the greatest interest, as well as what he has to say about swelling and inflammation of the testicles. "In truth," says Kurt Sprengel, in his *History of Medicine*, "he makes no mention of relations with impure women; but the callous edges which he indicates as the distinctive character of this sort of ulcers indicate the evident presence of an internal virus." This virus, which was named leprosy or syphilis, existed in a great number of the local maladies which Galen and Oribases have not described as possessing venereal symptoms, but which they treated empirically, relying on the ancient topics, the majority of which came from the Orient, like the maladies themselves, which were simpler and less mistakable in the cradle of their birth.

We may attribute to the development of the leprous or venereal maladies at Rome the establishment of archiatiuers, or public physicians. The first who had borne the title of archiater and fulfilled the functions of the office in the interior of the imperial palace was Ancromachus, the ancient, who lived under Nero. This archiater exercised a supervision over the health not only of the Emperor, but also of all the officers of the palace. This task was so complicated that a single physician could not suffice for it, and the number of palatial archiatiuers (*archiatri palatini*) was always on the increase until the time of Constantine. They were sometimes decorated with high dignities, and the Emperor described them as *praesul spectabilis*, or honorable master. At Rome and in all the cities of the Empire there had been established also popular archiatiuers (*archiatri populares*), who practiced their art gratuitously, in the interest of the people, and who acted, so to speak, as the police of public health. There was, at first, one of the archiatiuers in each of the regions of Rome, there being therefore, fourteen physicians for the whole city; but this number was doubled and tripled, and soon they were as numerous as the priestesses of Venus. Antoninus Pius regulated and completed this noble institution; he decreed that ten popular archia-

ters should be named for the large cities, seven for cities of the second class and five for the smallest ones. The archiatiuers formed in each city a medical college which had its own pupils. This college was recruited by voting on a list of candidates presented to it by the municipality in the case of a vacancy in the office of archiater. The municipality thus assured itself that the health and lives of its citizens should be entrusted only to men who were upright and well instructed. These archiatiuers enjoyed various privileges, which bore witness to the deference and protection accorded them by the authorities. They were paid at the expense of the State, through the decurion, who saw that their wages were delivered to them without any being held back. The State accorded them this treatment, according to the Justinian code, in order that they might be able to furnish free remedies to the poor, and that they might not be obliged, in order to live, to demand a remuneration for their services. They might, however, accept the recompense which a patient offered them out of gratitude; but they must wait for this until the patient had been cured. The archiatiuers were exempt from providing lodgings for troops, from appearing in ordinary courts of justice, from accepting the post of guardian or curator and from paying any war tax, either in silver, wheat or horses. Finally, whoever dared offend or insult them in any manner was exposed to arbitrary punishment and often to a considerable fine. These physicians of the poor were not, probably, of those ill-famed Greeks who had come to Rome to sell antidotes, to cut off and cauterize warts, to bathe and dress ulcers, when they were not fulfilling the still lower functions of the lenocinium, and when they did not submit to the vilest pleasures of their patients.

The popular archiatiuers, there is no doubt, were placed under the immediate authority of the aedile; legal medicine resulted, then, from this organization; but it is impossible to specify what it embraced or what its functions may have been in the policing of prostitutes. We do not possess, on this subject, one single text to guide or even enlighten us. The probabilities are such as to

lead us to suppose that these physicians of the various *arrodissements*, or regions, kept an open eye on the health of the registered meretrices. It is possible, even, that these meretrices found themselves bound to submit to the visits and the surveillance of certain particular physicians, since the Vestals and the gladiators had their own physicians. The code of Theodosius speaks formally of the Vestals and the gymnasia. Two ancient inscriptions set forth the functions of the physicians of the Circus, one of these inscriptions gives us the name of Eutychus, physician at the morning games (*medicus ludi matutini*). It is, then, quite natural that the meretrices should have had also their physicians, more experienced and wiser than the others in the treatment of impure maladies. As to the courtezans who were not under the jurisdiction of the aedile, they probably preferred to physicians those old women called *medicae*, who were not only midwives (*obstetrics*), for they gave themselves as much to magic as to empirical medicine. The name of *medica* which they assumed in the exercise of their art proves that they practised it often with the authorization of the aedile and of the college of archiaters. Gruter reports this inscription: SECUNDA L. LIVILLAE MEDICA, but he does not explain it. This L. Livilla, did she have in her house two women slaves who were expert in the healing art, two midwives, or two makers of unguents and antidotes? Or, may we not rather be dealing here with a single *medica*, happy in her cures, *secunda*? It is to be understood, moreover, that the women who, in their accouchements, did not receive the aid of a physician, but rather those of the *obstetrix*, did so often because they did not wish to confide themselves to the indiscreet gazes of a man, especially when they happened to be afflicted with some secret or disgraceful malady (*pudenda*). There must, then, have been women physicians who treated the affections of women, and when the latter were rich enough to afford a certain number of slave girls and servant maids, there must have been among them a domestic physician charged with directing and watching over the health of the mistress. There were also, cer-

tainly, free or freed women who practiced medicine and surgery on their own account, and it was to them that the women of the people, who were ashamed of placing themselves in the hands of other physicians, repaired.

An epigram of Martial against Lesbia, a Greek courtezan who had some vogue, alludes to one of these sexual maladies which the women, even the most shameless ones, would have blushed to divulge to a physician of another sex than their own: "Each time that you get up from your chair, I have often remarked, my unfortunate Lesbia, that your tunic sticks to your behind (*paedicant miseram, Lesbia, te tunicae*) and that in order to detach it, you draw it to the right and to the left with so much effort that you draw from yourself tears and groans; for the cloth adheres to your rump and penetrates your rectum, like a vessel caught between two rocks of the Symplegades. Should you like to be rid of this shameful inconvenience? I will teach you a way: neither get up nor sit down!" It was for local affections of the same sort that sitting baths were often recommended by Celsus and by the Roman physicians. The piece of furniture which was made use of in taking these baths, as frequent in good health as in a state of disease, was of different forms, square, round or oval, in terra cotta, in bronze and even in silver. It was called the *solum*, as though a woman, in occupying it, were seated on a throne, before or after the most delicate act of royalty. An ancient commentator of Martial says that the women of Rome, matrons or courtezans, at the period of Asiatic lust and luxury, would have refused their favors to their lovers or their husbands, if they had not been permitted to bathe themselves (*abluerent*), in a bidet of silver. These ablutions became more frequent as the women became less healthy and the health of men more exposed. To these ablutions, and to those which took place incessantly in the baths and rubbing rooms, to the massages and fomentations which always accompanied them, might be attributed many cures of recent or light maladies; in any case, the development of

venereal affections encountered powerful obstacles in the daily and almost constant habit of sudorific baths.

Physicians, especially those who possessed a numerous and rich clientele, certainly disdained to lower themselves by treating secret maladies; they did not undertake such cases except with repugnance, in the hope of being generously rewarded. This medical disdain with regard to this species of malady impresses us as due to the very habits of these celebrated physicians, who would come to visit their patients with a cortege of twenty, thirty and sometimes a hundred disciples, as Martial tells us. The number of these disciples indicated, proportionally, the merit or, rather, the reputation of their master and, following the latter, all would feel the patient and diagnose the disease. There is no need to demonstrate the fact that a venereal malady would not lend itself thus as a spectacle for medical observation and as a subject for the jocularities of a physician's suite. There were, then, physicians or drug vendors who appropriated to themselves the treatment of secret maladies, and who surrounded with mystery and a tried discretion this treatment which empiric medicine was too often forced to abandon to surgery. An obscene disease, long neglected at first, then treated largely by empiricism, would ordinarily end in a terrible operation, of which Martial speaks in the following epigram. "Baccara, the Greek, confides the cure of his shameful parts to a physician, his rival; Baccara will be a eunuch." Another epigram of Martial, on the death of Festus, permits us to suppose that patients frequently despaired of a cure and slew themselves to escape incurable infirmities and a lingering agony. Such was the end of the Emperor Domitian's friend, the noble Festus, who, afflicted with a disease which was eating away his throat, a horrible disease, which had already invaded his face, resolved to die and consoled his friends in person before stoically striking himself with a dagger like the great Cato.

Cures were, must have been, long and difficult, when the disease had had time to spread and take root. Charlatans, who sold,

without supervision, a quantity of drugs, in tablets and in rolls bearing their seal, profited, necessarily, from the embarrassing situation in which the patient, deprived of a physician, found himself. In many circumstances, superstition undertook the task of struggling against the malady, the progress of which it could not even arrest. The miserable patient would go from temple to temple, from god to goddess, with offerings, prayers and vows. The patients who had the means to have votive tablets painted had these tablets hung up in the sanctuaries of Venus, of Priapus, of Hercules or of Aesculapius. It is permissible to believe that decency was respected in these allegorical paintings. Nevertheless, it was a habit, also, to hang up about the altars of all the divinities figurative representations of the diseased organs in platinum, in terra cotta, in wood, in stone or in precious metal. Expiatory sacrifices were offered, in which cakes made of pure flour (*coli phia*), which had the form of the sexual parts, and which assumed the most extravagant proportions, were employed. The priests of certain gods and goddesses ate no other bread than these obscene cakes, which libertines also preserved for their joyous tables: *Illa silegineis pinguescit adultera cunnis*, says Martial, who attributes to this *patisserie* an action favorable to embonpoint. The chapels and the temples which saw most of these patients and their offerings were those the priests of which dabbled in medicine. Moreover, everybody had the right to call himself a physician at Rome and to make drugs. The secret maladies opened a vast field for the speculations of the charlatan, and among these speculators, the oculists were not the least ingenious; the barbers also did not limit themselves to the comb and razor; the barbers, those astute lenons, who always had their hands held out for all the commerce of Prostitution, regarded as their peculiar property the maladies which came from it; the slaves of the baths, the *unctores* and the *aliptes* of both sexes, knew, naturally, all the health secrets of their clients, and after having furnished them the means of debauchery they furnished them the means of cure; till, in the end, the maladies of Venus were so

multiplied and so ordinary that each person created a hygiene for his own use and might, at need, treat himself, without taking anyone into his confidence, and without having to fear any indiscretion.

And yet, these maladies, so numerous, so varied and so singular among the ancients, have remained in the shadow, and the greatest physicians of antiquity appear to have been a party to a tacit understanding that they were to be hidden under the cloak of Aesculapius. But we may readily imagine what they were like, when we think of the frightful degeneration of manners in the Rome of the emperors; when we see Prostitution lying in wait for infants as they leave the cradle, seizing upon them with a cruel joy before they have attained their seventh year. “May my good genius confound me,” cries the Quartilla of Petronius, “if I ever remember being a virgin! (*Junonem meam iratam habeam, si unquam me meminerim virginem fuisse!*)” The venereal evil was inherent in Prostitution and spread everywhere with it. If the health of a master became suspect, that of all his slaves ran great risks. A Roman orator, Acherius, a contemporary of Horace, dared to say, proudly, in pleading a criminal case: “An immodest complacency is a crime in a free man, a necessity in a slave, a duty in the freed man (*Impudicitia, inquit Acherius, in ingenuo crimen est, in servo necessitas, in libero officium!*)!” It is Cbelius Rhodiginus who reports, in his *Antiquae Lectiones*, this abominable apothegm of the *paedicones*.



## CHAPTER XXI

WE KNOW nothing of the services which the *medicae* rendered to women in those delicate circumstances in which the health of the latter called for the eye and hand of a person of their own sex; we are reduced to conjectures, very plausible, it is true, on this secret chapter of the healing art, which the writers of antiquity have left shrouded in an impenetrable veil. But if we are unable to appreciate, from well-established authorities, the role which the *medicae* filled in the therapeutics of love, we shall find no difficulty in establishing their active and useful intervention, not only in cases of pregnancy and childbirth, but even more in the mysterious preparation of cosmetics, perfumes and philtres. There were, undoubtedly, at Rome and in the principal cities of the Roman empire, certain *medicae juratae*, as Anianus calls them in his *Annotations on the Theodosian Code*: “Whenever there is doubt as to the pregnancy of a woman, five sworn midwives, that is to say, those having licenses to study medicine, (*medicae*) receive an order to visit this woman (*ventrem jubentur inspicere*).” But beyond these emeritus practitioners, who probably underwent a medical examination, and who were not subject to the control of the popular archiaters, many women, especially foreign women, freed women or even slaves, gave themselves to the study of occult medicine and combined with this art, whether they had studied it or not, the trade of the perfumer and the frequently criminal practices of magic. Hyginus, in his collection of mythological fables, tells us thus on what occasion it was medicine was first practiced by a woman in Greece. In the most remote times, there were men who assisted women in childbirth, although modesty had to suffer from the assistance it was obliged to accept. But a young Athenian woman, Agonodice by name, resolved to free her sex from this

sort of dishonorable servitude, at which Juno was indignant; so she cut her hair, took the habit of a man and went to take lessons from a celebrated physician, who instructed her in the art of childbirth, and who made of her an excellent midwife. Then she commenced to supplant her masters and to execute her project; she showed herself so adroit, so clever, so decent above all that the matrons in childbed would have no other physician. It is probable that Agonodice declared her sex to them under pledge of secrecy; for soon no woman in Athens would have recourse in child delivery to the aid of the physicians. These latter were astonished at first; they were irritated and ended by leaguing themselves against the young rival, who had taken away their clientele. No one but Agonodice was to be seen at the bed of women in childbirth, and these women smiled on her and spoke to her with a strange familiarity. Her youth, her charming figure, her graces and her merits awoke calumny; it was rumored that she knew the art of changing into pleasure the pains of child-bearing; she was denounced to the magistrate as being immodest and the corrupter of decent women. She did not respond to her accusers and appeared before the Areopagus. There, without alleging anything in her own defense, she opened her tunic and revealed her sex, which won her absolution. The physicians were convinced, and the people demanded the repeal of an ancient law which forbade women to practice the healing art. This story would tend to prove that medicine was always practiced afterward by men and women indiscriminately, and that the latter reserved for themselves almost exclusively, at Rome as at Athens, the treatment of diseases peculiar to their sex.

The women who took up medicine, and especially secret medicine, were then very numerous and of different classes: the *medicae*, the most in esteem for their knowledge and their character, undoubtedly dealt with all branches of the art; the *obstetrices* limited themselves to the role of midwife; the *adsestrices* were but aides or pupils of the midwives; then, in the last class, a numerous and varied one, came the perfumers and the magicians,

all of whom, or almost all, belonged or had belonged to the army of prostitutes. This trade was the refuge of old courtezans; it was a favorite employment of procuresses. Under the general name of *sagae* were included the various species of ointment and philtre-vendors, who often manufactured their own wares, with magical ceremonies invented in Thessaly. But the *sagae* were not all magicians; the majority did not even know the simplest and most innocent elements of this execrable art; many were in absolute ignorance as to the composition of the drugs they sold; these drugs frequently caused sad accidents, which justice, however, winked at; some of these women were but a sort of unauthorized midwife, whose business was the performing of abortions and who surrounded with invocations and amulets the birth of illegitimate children. It is known that the number of these births was considerable at Rome, and that each morning there were to be seen in the streets, at the thresholds of the houses, under the porticoes and in the ovens of the bakeshops, the corpses of new-born babes, who had been devoted to certain death by being exposed naked on the hard stones as soon as they had come out of the maternal belly. It was the saga who performed the frightful mission of infanticide, and who stifled, in the folds of her robe, the innocent victims who had been condemned to perish violently. Sometimes, it is true, the mother had pity on the fruit of her entrails and contented herself with exposing the child, wrapped in its swaddling clothes, either on the shore of the lake Velabrum (*lacus Velabrensis*) or in the market place of Peas (*Foro olitorio*), at the foot of the column of Milk (*Columna lactaria*); there, at least, these unfortunate orphans were taken in and adopted at the expense of the State, which acted as their guardian, inflicting on them, however, the stigma of bastardy. It happened, also, that sterile matrons, *suppostrices* (infamous shrews who made a trade of changing infants in their capacity of nurse), and citizens who were chagrined at having no heirs would come to choose, among these poor little abandoned ones, those who might best serve their honorable or dishonorable designs. Some-

times the Velabrum would echo with cries in the darkness, and there might be seen, passing like spectres, the *sagae* or the mothers themselves, bringing their tribute to this hideous Minotaur, in what was called the act of exposition (*expositio*) of infants on the public highway. It is evident that the origin of the French word *sage-femme* must be derived from that of *saga*, which possessed only a bad connotation, and which Nonius employs as a synonym for a woman instigator to debauchery (*indagatrix ad libidinem*).

The *sagae* turned their hands readily to abortions, which they practiced at the beginning of pregnancy (*aborsus*) or in the last months of gestation (*abortus*). These abortions, which the law was supposed to punish but which it avoided investigating, because it would have had too much to do, became so frequent under the emperors that the least shameless women did not fear to prevent in this manner an increase of their family. There were certain potions which procured, with no danger, a prompt and easy abortion; but use was also made of injurious drugs, which killed at once the mother and her offspring. In this case, the obstetrix or the *saga* who, from imprudence, from ignorance or otherwise, had committed a double murder, was looked upon as a poisoner; and the poor wretch was given the extreme penalty. As to those who administered these abortive potions and who did not do so without the knowledge of the pregnant woman, the State might confiscate a part of their goods and send them to the islands, for the reason that their example was a bad one, as the jurisconsult, Paulus, says. But the punishment of this crime was very rare, and it soon became impossible; for all the world was guilty on the same score and the empress often set the example on the advice of the emperor, without even having the modesty to conceal this outrage to nature. The most ordinary motive for continual abortions was none other than the fear of spoiling the beauty of a polished belly and a beautiful throat, by sacrificing them to the more or less serious consequences of a painful pregnancy and a dolorous childbirth. "Do you think," says Aulus,

Gellius, speaking indignantly of these criminal stepmothers, "do you think that nature has given breasts to women merely as gracious protuberances designed to adorn the bosom rather than to nourish infants? Acting on this idea, the majority of our marvelous ladies (*prodigiosae mulieres*) force themselves to dry up and exhaust that sacred fountain of the life of the human race and run the risk of corrupting or diverting their milk, as though this spoiled their beauty. It is the same folly which leads them to have abortions committed with the aid of various injurious drugs, so that the polished surface of their belly may not be wrinkled and sink under the weight of their burden and the travail of childbed." The abortion was, frequently, motivated by reasons still more culpable; sometimes, a married woman desired to destroy the proof of her adultery; sometimes, a woman libertine, feeling her desires and amorous ardors becoming extinct under the influence of pregnancy, would employ a criminal means to avoid losing that which she preferred to the joys of maternity. This enervation of the senses during gestation was not, however, general; and some women, on the contrary, whose imagination had been heightened by debauchery, discovered that they were never more ardent in love than during pregnancy, which assured them, at the same time, against obstacles of a similar sort. Thus, Julia, daughter of Augustus, did not give herself to her lovers except when she was pregnant by her husband, Agrippa, and the period of her pregnancy proved to be no interruption to her pleasures. Macrobius reports that she would reply to those who expressed astonishment at the fact that her children, despite her derelictions, always resembled her husband: "As a matter of fact, I never take passengers aboard until the ship is full (*at enim numquam nisi navi plenâ tollo vectorem*)."<sup>1</sup> As soon as a woman became pregnant, advice, offers and seductions were not lacking to decide her to make a sacrifice of her infant to her beauty; she was assailed and surrounded by the procurresses of abortion: "She hides from you her pregnancy," says a character in the *Truculentus* of Plautus, "for she fears that you will per-

suade her to consent to an abortion (*ut abortioni operam daret*) and to the death of the child she bears."

The pregnancies and abortions gave the sagae of Rome much to do; but this was but the least of the mysteries of their art. They drew still more profit from their ointments, their perfumes, their philtres and their evil charms. These latter resembled the sorceries which took place in Greece, especially in Thessaly, at the most ancient period; and the story which Horace in his *Epo- des* gives us of a magical incantation does not differ from the picture which Theocritus had painted of a similar scene three centuries before. The object of these abominable superstitions was, moreover, always the same, at all times, among all peoples. The witch drew lots and compounded philtres. These philtres had for object the reviving of the fires of love and the creation of new, superhuman and inextinguishable ardors; these philtres might change hate into love or love into hate and vanquish all the resistances of modesty or indifference. The Fates were particularly useful in cases of resentment and revenge. This sort of incantation was undoubtedly rarer among the Romans than among the Greeks; but, on the other hand, never was the science of love-philtres carried further, never was it more widespread than at Rome under the Caesars. Horace makes us acquainted with the abominable practices with which the sagae of his time defiled themselves in the manufacture of amorous philtres. Horace had been the lover of a Neopolitan perfumer, named Gratidia, who had been vowed to public execration under the name of Canidia. Horace, in his liaison with Canidia, whom he ended by detesting as much as he had loved her, had been initiated, with horror, into the blackest secrets of the magician: "They had continual relations with the courtezans," says M. Walckenaer in his excellent *History of the Life and Writings of Horace*, "they were of the same class, and they mingled in all sorts of love intrigues." Gratidia was one of the most celebrated among the sagae of Rome, thanks to the poetic wrath of Horace, who could not forgive her for having sold herself to an old libertine named Varus; this

perfume-vendor was still sufficiently young and sufficiently beautiful to find someone to whom to sell her charms, and these charms were worthy of being the object of regret on the part of an abandoned lover. The Scholiasts of Horace have thought that the poet was reproaching Gratidia especially with having exercised over him her power in the making of love beverages, and with having deprived him of his youth, his forces, his illusions and his health. Horace, as a matter of fact, was constantly afflicted with a disease of the eyes, which might, without any insult to Canidia, be attributed to the philtres and the malady of Venus.

The Esquiline hill was the ordinary theatre of these invocations and magic sacrifices. This mount served as a cemetery for slaves, who were buried pell-mell without a coffin; by night there were no living persons in this solitude, peopled with the dead, except thieves who found safety there and sorceresses who came there to accomplish their shady tasks. At the other side of the Esquiline, near the Porta Metia, surrounded with scaffolds and the crosses from which hung the corpses of the crucified, the *Carnifex*, or hangman, had his isolated dwelling, as though to keep a watch over his subjects; a monstrous statue of Priapus also kept watch over this infected and hideous retreat of the sagae and of thieves. There, by the pale light of the moon, Canidia might have been seen running with naked feet, disheveled hair, uncovered bosom and a body wrapped in an ample cloak, in the manner of her accomplice, the old Sagana. Horace had seen them, these horrible wenches, tearing with their teeth a black sheep, pouring the blood of the animal into a ditch, scattering about them the tatters of palpitating flesh, evoking the Manes and interrogating destiny. Dogs and serpents came to witness this somber sacrifice, and the moon would veil its bloody face in order not to light up the frightful spectacle. Priapus himself had a horror of the sight, and he burst in two the trunk of a fig tree on which his image had been grossly carved. At the noise of the splitting wood, the two witches took fright and fled without completing their evil task, beside themselves and spilling parts of

themselves along the way: Canidia her teeth; Sagana her pyramidal peruke and her supply of herbs and constellated rings. They came back, however, on another night, to the Esquiline hill for a mystery still more abominable: they had kidnaped a young child from its family; they had buried it alive in a ditch in which slaves were buried, with the head of the victim alone protruding above the ground; they offered it cooked food, the odor of which increased its hunger and its agony. The child conjures them in the name of its mother, in the name of their own children, but Canidia and Sagana are impitiable; Canidia burns in a magic fire the wild fig tree torn from the tombs, the funereal cypress, the wings and eggs of the hoot owl, soaked in the blood of the toad, the poisonous herbs produced by Colchos and Iberia and the bones taken from the mouth of a famished she-dog. Sagana, her hair bristling, dances in front of the pyre, sprinkling it with lustral water: "O Varus," cries Canidia, biting her nails with her livid teeth, "O Varus, what tears you are going to shed! Yes, these unknown philtres will force you soon enough to come back to me, and all the charms of the Marsi will not give you back your reason. I shall prepare and pour myself a beverage which will overcome in you the disgust that I inspire. Yes, the heavens shall fall below the sea, the earth shall raise itself above the clouds, or else you shall burn for me as bitumen does in these sinister fires." But the weeping child is on the point of expiring; its voice grows weak; its eyeballs are immobilely fixed on the food exposed in front of its mouth; Canidia arms herself with a dagger and approaches it, in order to open its belly at the moment it breathes its last sigh, for from its desiccated liver and the marrow of its bones a love drink must be composed (*exsucta uti medulla et aridum jecur amoris esset poculum*): "I vow you to the furies," cries the unfortunate child, in its death rattle, "and this malediction nothing in the world shall be able to ward off from you. I am perishing by your cruelty; but, nocturnal spectre, I shall appear to you; my shade shall tear your face with my crooked nails, which are the strength of my gods, the Manes; I shall

weigh upon your breathless bosoms, and I shall deprive you of sleep by turning you cold with fright. In the streets, the populace shall follow at your heels, obscene old creatures. Then, the wolves and the crows of the Esquiline shall dispute over your members, deprived of burial!"

All the maledictions of the sagae were not so terrible, and ordinarily these makers of philtres only went by night to the Esquiline mount in order to cook magic plants by the light of the moon, to seek there locks of hair and bones of the dead and to take the grease of a hanged man. It was also necessary to pay them very dearly in order to obtain the benefit of these execrable practices, which were accompanied by the stain of human blood, although, to tell the truth, the life of children was little esteemed at Rome; but the child that was sacrificed, after having been buried alive, must have been stolen from its parents or its nurse; otherwise, its liver and marrow were not of the least potency in procuring the gift of love. Now, the rape of a child, free-born or ingenuus, might be punished with death. The magical philtres were prepared with one of three objects in view, sought by love or hatred from the art of the sagae: to inspire love in the man or woman who did not love; to inspire hatred in the man or woman who was in love; to paralyze and freeze in a man all the ardor and energy of his temperament. This third spell, which the middle-ages so feared under the name of *eagle's knot*, and which criminal jurisprudence has constantly prosecuted, even to our day, was no less detested by the Romans, who were indignant at seeing themselves the butt of its sad effects. The sagae excelled in this sort of spell; they knew how to strike with impotence the most invincible natures, and all they needed for this was to make knots out of cords or black threads, pronouncing certain words and certain invocations. This was what was called *praeligare*, when the object was to prevent the first transports between a lover and his mistress, between a wife and her husband; *nodum religare*, when it was desired to annihilate and suspend transports which had already existed; the eagle's knot, which was, in all times, the terror of lov-

ers, never had any other origin than in a phantom of the imagination; but the ancients, like the moderns, in attributing to it an invisible power, found in it at least a refuge for their masculine vanity. The Romans had a singular fear of this spell, which seemed to them a shame for the one thus deprived of the privileges of his sex; they looked upon it as so terrible and so tenacious that they avoided even speaking of it; they believed that they were constantly menaced with it, and in order to conjure it away, if they happened to be in love, they formed knots, which they soon undid, out of cords or thongs which they had first twisted about a statue of Hercules or of Priapus. These sacrifices, which the men offered to these divinities, in secret, upon the altar of the domestic fireside, these sacrifices had no other object than to break the magic knots which an enemy hand might have been able to make in order to bind their senses and deceive the hope of pleasure. The least allusion to this fatal conspiracy of magic was looked upon as of evil omen, as though one had thereby evoked, by naming the thing, an evil genius. Poets and writers, however old they might be, feared to touch on this delicate subject which, one day or another, might become a personal matter with them and afflict them in their turn; and so, one was careful not to laugh at the misfortune of another. It is with an extreme reserve that Tibullus, in one of his elegies, speaks of the grief of a lover, who seeks in vain and does not find himself, even in the arms of the beautiful Pholoe: "What old woman with her magical chants and powerful philtres," says the poet of love, "has cast over you a spell during the silent night? Magic causes to pass over into a field the harvest of the neighboring fields; magic arrests the march of the irritated serpent; magic even endeavors to drag the moon from her chariot. But why blame your misfortune on the chants of a sorceress; why blame her philtres? Beauty has no need of the aid of magic; but that which renders it impotent is the fact that you have caressed too often that handsome body, that you have kissed her too long and that you have too often pressed her thighs against your own." (*Sed corpus*

*tetigisse nocet, sed longa dedisse oscula, sed femori conseruisse femur.)* Tibullus has shown so great a reserve in approaching this subject of evil augury that the elegy which he devotes to it is full of reticences and obscurities.

But the philtres which were the most potent and also the most to be feared were those which the sage and the old courtezans made, from unknown recipes, without the aid of magic. The unique object of these philtres was to warm the senses and increase the transports of love. A prodigious use was made of these at Rome, in spite of the dangers accompanying such a super-excitation of nature. Every day, a beverage of this sort caused death, madness, paralysis or epilepsy; but this fatal example stopped no one, and the thirst for pleasure imposed silence on reason. These philtres, however, were not all equally deadly, and ordinarily, the accidents which were attributed to them came, rather, from their abuse than from their moderate use. At first, libertines would content themselves with a minimum dose, which would give them all the fires of their youth; but as these fires diminished, they would gradually increase this poisonous dose, to which they owed a few simulated moments of pleasure, until soon the philtre was without effect upon their exhausted nature, which spent the last forced sigh of love in the form of madness. In this manner, a number perished before their time, including a friend of Cicero, L. Licin. Lucullus, the model of prodigals and voluptuaries, the poet Lucretius and so many others who passed from madness to death. *Aphrodisiaca* was the name given to all these philtres, which were, in general, more or less harmful in their effects, and which had for object the reviving of the fires of Venus. They were administered, also, to women lacking in sensuality and to young girls whose amorous appetites had not been awakened; but wise and reputable physicians highly disapproved of the employment of these aphrodisiacs. "These philtres, which render the complexion pale," cries Ovid in his *Remedia Amoris*, "are of no profit to young girls; these philtres destroy the reason and contain the germs of a furious madness." The majority of

these philtres were potions which had to be taken on trust, without knowing the ingredients which superstition or empiricism had put into them. The unfortunate one who exposed himself to poison in order to gain a few instants of sensual pleasure frequently had no other guarantee than the reputation, good or bad, of the saga to whom he went to buy this pleasure. Often, it is true, the potions were composed merely of the juice of herbs: "The plants which stimulate the senses," says Celsus, "are the calamint, thyme, savory, hyssop and, especially, pennyroyal, as well as the rue and the onion" (or rather the mushroom, *cepa*); but often, also, these dangerous beverages included mineral and even animal matters, which constituted the most terrible *amatoria*. A beverage of this sort, of which Canidia possessed the recipe, was called, according to Horace, the *poculum desiderii*, or the *potion of desire*. There were, also, natural waters, sulphurous and ferruginous, which were looked upon as favorable to the senses and inoffensive in their erotic effects. These were the philtres which medicine offered in opposition to those of the perfumers and magicians. These exciting waters, *aquae amatrices*, as they were called, lost almost all their virtue when they were taken far from their source. Martial says, in one of his epigrams: "Hermaphrodite hates the waters which bring love (*odit amatrices Hermaphroditus aquas*);" in another epigram, he appears to give us to understand that waters of this sort were farmed out, or at least possessed, by women, undoubtedly courtezans, who had given them a vogue which they exploited: "Who is that youth who goes far away from the pure ways of the fountain of Yanthis, and who flees to the Naiad who is the mistress of this fountain (*at fugit ad dominam Naiada*)? Is it not Hylas? Too happy because Hercules, the half-god of Tirynthe, is adored in the groves which surround the fountain, and because he keeps so close a watch over his amorous waters! Arginus, draw without fear from the spring to give us a drink; the nymphs will do you no harm, but watch out that Hercules does not get the better of you!" These *aquae amatrices* were not then, as a number of

scholars have believed, beverages composed and prepared by the hand of a saga but, quite simply, mineral waters which, in reanimating the vigor of a fatigued temperament, disposed it naturally to labors of love, in appearing to invoke a new youth.

Precise information as to the composition of these philtres is not to be found anywhere in the writers of antiquity. We may understand, moreover, the mystery with which the vendors of philtres surrounded their frequently culpable industry, a mystery which science made no effort to penetrate. They were concerned, merely, with the effects, which were truly prodigious; they were not concerned with causes. The physiologist, Virey, has gathered from the pages of Dioscorides Theophrastus, Pliny, etc., all the scattered and indecisive details which have permitted him to reconstruct the history of aphrodisiacs among the ancients. He divides them into two principal classes, the vegetable and the animal; among the first he distinguishes stupefying or narcotic drugs; the bitter and aromatic stimulants, the odorants and spirits. The mandragora, the pineapple, the wild hemp, in which one recognizes the nepenthes of Homer, produced a voluptuous drunkenness, which was prolonged into an indefatigable increase of erotic sensations, and which ended in a delicious loss of memory, to the point of stupefaction and even death. The mushrooms, especially the phalli and the morils, the agarics, the birthworts, the bitter resins, the aromatic herbs and the grains of these plants, stimulated powerfully the organs of pleasure; spiritous liquors into which had been infused certain odorous flowers produced, also, in both sexes, an increase of sensual activity; but these excitants, borrowed from the vegetable kingdom, soon lost all power over the monstrous debauchees, whose object was always to exceed the limits of human force, and who sought their models among the gods of their amorous mythology. They had, therefore, recourse to redoubtable philtres, by means of which they might, for entire nights, persuade themselves that Jupiter or Hercules had descended from Olympus to be metamorphosed into a man. They sometimes died as a result, without

being sated with pleasure, and their frightful priapism would continue for a long time after their death. Insects, fishes and animal substances were, in turn, called upon to take part in this fearful mixture, which bore the characteristic name of *satyrion*. Cantharides, crickets, spiders and many other coleoptera, pulverized and reduced to powder form, or merely infused into the wine, acted with violence on the sexual organs and communicated to them, immediately, a violent irritation, which frequently led to grave affections of the bladder. With the same success, the eggs of the mullet, the cuttle-fish and the turtle were employed, by being mixed with ambergris; but after these prodigies of virility, after long and frenzied transports of love, the victim of his own libertinism would fall into a convulsive malady, which ended only in death. "Whence," cries Juvenal, "those attacks of madness, whence that obscuration of the intelligence, whence that profound forgetfulness of everything!" Juvenal speaks of Thessalian philtres, which a criminal wife made use of to disturb the reason of her husband. Martial, who did not condone the use of these dangerous beverages, merely advises fatigued lovers, or those who have grown cold, to use bulbs (onions, according to one commentator; mushrooms, according to another; spices, in our own opinion): "Let him who does not know how to conduct himself as a man in the amorous contest, let him eat bulbs and he shall be invincible; old man, if your ardor is languishing (*languet anus*) do not cease eating those generous bulbs, and tender Venus will smile once more upon your exploits!"

*Qui praestare virum Cypriae certamine nescit,  
Manducet bulbos, et bene fortis erit.  
Languet anus: pariter bulbos ne mandere cessen,  
Et tua ridebit proelia blanda Venus.*

But of all the amatory philtres which were made by the sage, the most celebrated and the most formidable was the hippomane,

as to the contents of which scholars are not of the same mind. The writers of antiquity have contributed not a little to leaving in doubt the origin of the hippomane, since they assigned to it two different sources. Virgil, for example, applies the name to a bitter and fetid virus which flows from the vulva of mares in the rutting: "A sticky virus is distilled from the organ of mares; it is the hippomane, which is too often taken by odious stepmothers and mixed with magic herbs in their conjurations." Juvenal, Lucan, Pliny and Ovid, on the contrary, give the name of hippomane to an excrescence of the flesh, which sometimes shows itself on a new-born colt, and which the mare bites off with her teeth and devours before offering her teats to her foal. This excrescence of black flesh, the size of a fig, the villagers are careful to cut away and to preserve with care for sale to the sagae, who make use of it in their philtres. It is probable, after these different statements, that the sagae recognized two kinds of hippomane; the second is represented as more active and more redoubtable than the first. Juvenal shows us Caesonia who, to increase the violence of the potion, puts into it the entire forehead of a nascent colt (*qui totam tremuli frontem Caesonia pulli infudit*). Finally, Juvenal paints with horror the frightful results of the hippomane, which produced the madness and death of Caligula, the reign of Nero and the crimes of that reign. *Tanti partus equae!* he cries. "And all that is the fruit of a mare, all that is the work of a feminine poisoner!"

They were veritable poisoners, those remorseless and nameless old women, the debris, as they were, of prostitution and debauchery, who mingled with their philtres not only the excretions of animals, castoreum, musk, civet, the sperm of the deer, the member of the wolf, the hedgehog, etc., but also the menstrual blood of women and the seminal fluid of men. These horrible mixtures engendered terrifying maladies, which were not sufficient, however, to frighten the libertines and call a halt on excesses. These magicians and *emeritae* added always to their erotic preparations certain ingredients taken from human na-

ture, the marrow of bone, the liver, the testicles, the gall of a child or a condemned man and, especially, that thin pellicle which sometimes envelopes the head of the new-born as they leave the matrix. The midwives adroitly removed this pellicle, to which they attributed so many singular virtues, and they would sell it very dearly to the makers of amorous philtres, or even to advocates, who believed it would make them more eloquent if they wore it as a talisman. We may judge that the commerce of the sagae was very widespread and very lucrative; but none of these learned operators has left us a book containing the recipes which made her her reputation and her fortune. The art of perfumery and cosmetics, which the sagae practiced also, with incredible resources in the way of refinements and inventions, is no longer known to us. Poets and writers of all sorts return incessantly to these perfumes, these cosmetics (*unguenta*), which everywhere accompanied one or the other Venus; but they never step out of vague generalities, and they never initiate us into the innumerable secrets of ancient perfumery, as though these secrets, already known in the time of Homer, who assigns their origin to the gods and goddesses, were only to be transmitted from generation to generation under the faith of an oath. Among the Romans, the passion for perfumes having become as ardent and unbridled as the passion for sensual pleasures, the trade of the perfumers and the *unguentariae* had made extraordinary progress, and the numerous family of essences, oils, balms, pomades, powders, pastes, cosmetic and aromatic ingredients had been infinitely augmented, increasing every day and levying contribution on the vegetable, mineral and animal kingdoms of the entire world, in order to combine and create new and odoriferous mixtures and, at the same time, new pleasures for the benefit of sensuality and of love.

The ancients, the Romans above all, could not understand love without perfumes, and, as a matter of fact, the acrid and stimulating perfumes of which they made a profuse employment in their daily life were a marvelous preparation for love. It is

known that the musk, the civet, the ambergris and other animal odors which they wore in their clothing, in their hair and in all parts of their bodies, do produce a very active effect on the nervous system and on the organs of generation. They did not limit themselves to the exterior use of these perfumes, for without speaking of the energetic philtres reserved for particular circumstances, they did not fear to make use of aromatic spices in some quantity in their daily food. It is, undoubtedly, to these permanent causes that we must attribute the appetites, the permanent pruriency, which tormented Roman society, and which hurled it into all the excesses of physical love. Asiatic lust had brought these perfumes with it, and from that time on, there was so prodigious a consumption of aromatic substances at Rome that one might have believed Arabia, Persia and all the Orient would not be sufficient to produce them. Vainly did a few philosophers, a few virtuous and simple-minded men, unfortunately old men, endeavor to combat this mode, as dangerous for health as it was for manners; in vain was their wise advice repeated in books of morality, even in poetry and in the theatre; no more heed was given their counsels than was paid to their reproaches and their menacing predictions. Rome was soon as perfumed as Sybaris and Babylon. But the more perfumes were thought of and sought after, the more the perfumers, male and female, were despised; these were but aged courtezans and procuresses; they were but old *cinoedes* and infamous lenons. Decent folk, who had need of their services, never entered their shops without hiding the face, whether in the evening or in the day. Cicero and Horace speak of them only with a profound disdain. "Add, if you will," says the first in his treatise *De Officiis*, "add those unguentaries, the tumblers and the miserable herd of dice-players." Horace puts on an equal footing the lenon (*auceps*) and the unguentary in the vile population of the Tuscan town (*tusci turba impia vici*). As to the perfumers, their name alone was the greatest insult which might be addressed to a woman who piqued herself on being free-born (*ingenua*) and a citizen. The perfume

shops were but emporiums of prostitution and retreats of debauchery; and so, rich persons had in their own house a laboratory in which they made all the perfumes that they needed and they maintained one or a number of perfumers among their slaves or freed men.

There were, undoubtedly, characteristic perfumes which announced from afar the condition of the person who wore them; his rank, his manners and his state of health; this strong and penetrating odor revealed the necessity of hiding some bad natural odor; this sweet and gentle one was appropriate to elegant matrons, and to men of good taste and a decent way of life; this intoxicating one announced the courtezan, or at least the light and coquettish woman; this enervating and teasing one announced the passage of a giton; here was one perfume, there another, and on all sides, in the streets, on the promenade and in the houses, an indefinable melange of aromatic odors which absorbed the air. The truth is, each man, each woman, each child perfumed himself on leaving his bed, after the bath, after a meal and when he sought repose; the body was bathed in perfumed oils, which were also poured over the hair; clothing was impregnated with essences; aromatic spices were burned night and day; they were eaten in all foods and consumed in all drinks. The satirical Lucilius, in order to turn into ridicule this drug-mania, pretended to be astonished that his contemporaries, who took so many perfumes, did not smell worse than they did. "A woman smells good," says Plautus in his *Mostellaria*, "when she does not smell at all, for those old women who load themselves with perfume, those toothless and decrepit ones who cover with rouge the ruins of their beauty, as soon as their sweat is mingled with their perfumes, so soon do they begin to stink like a cook who makes a ragout by mixing a number of sauces." It was, principally, in the preludes to the palestra of Venus, in order to make use of the antique expression (*palestra venerea*), that perfumes came to the aid of voluptuous pleasures. The two lovers would anoint their entire bodies with embalmed spirits, after having washed

them in odoriferous water; incense was burning in the room, as though for a sacrifice; the bed was surrounded with garlands of flowers and strewn with roses; and the bed, as well as all the furniture, received a rain of nard and cinnamon. The ablutions in aromatic waters were frequently renewed in the course of the long hours of love, amid an atmosphere more perfumed than that of Olympus.

These perfumes, it may be conceived, had been invented by a people who knew what they wanted in the way of pleasure and who knew the means of exciting, prolonging and developing it. And so, in growing old, the prostitutes of both sexes gave themselves by preference to this kind of labor and commerce. They thus continued, in a manner, to serve, even though indirectly, the tastes of the public. When they composed some new perfume or cosmetic they were proud to give it their name. The perfumer Nicerotas invented the *nicerotiana*, of which Martial praises the stupefying odor (*fragras plumbea nicerotiana*); Folia, the magician, the friend and accomplice of Canidia, discovered an ingenious process for preparing the nard of Persia, which was afterwards called *foliatum*. But ordinarily, the perfume drew its name from the country which furnished its principal ingredient; there was the balm of Mendes, originally of Egypt; the ointment of Cyprus; the nard of Achaemenium; the oil of Arabia, the oil of Syria, the *malobathrum* of Sidon, etc. The majority of the perfumes, the most active at least, came from the Orient, and especially from the Arabic peninsula; and so, it was the custom to include, without distinction, all the products of the perfumers' art under the generic designation of *perfume of Arabia* (*arabicum unguentum*): "Burn," says Tibullus, "burn the perfume which the voluptuous Arab sends us from his rich country!" However, this term, *arabus* or *arabicus*, was applied more particularly to an odorous oil with which women and effeminate men anointed their long tresses. Another oil also was manufactured, one not less esteemed, from the grains of myrobolan (*myroblani*), an aromatic shrub which grew in Arabia. A number of

species of perfume, very much sought after, were also derived from the tree of Judea, the odoriferous gum of which was called *opobalsamum*; from the amomeum of Assyria, from the myrrh of Oronte, from the sweet marjoram of Cyprus (*amaracus cypri-nus*); from the cinnamon of India, etc. But as we have said, we are in almost total ignorance as to the dosages and constituents of these balsamic mixtures, which generally answered some need of the amorous life. The cosmetics, which always included some perfume in their composition, are even more unknown to us than the perfumes of the toilet and the amorous ones; the interested discretion of the vendors and purchasers has barely betrayed the names of a few of these marvelous secrets of preservative, dissimulating and decorative coquetry. In all times, these secrets have been the best guarded. Thus, we know nothing of that depilatory powder (*dropax unguentum*) with which hair was caused to fall from the body and even from the beard; nothing of that wash for the teeth (*odontotrimma*), destined to render them white and brilliant; nothing of the *diapasmata*, made up in pastilles by Cosmus in the time of Martial as a remedy for bad breath;\* nothing of the *malobathrum*, an oily distillation for the hair, etc. Pliny indicates merely a few recipes, that of the oil of quince (*melinum unguentum*), that of the *megalium* and the *telinum*, that, finally, of the ointment royal, which the Parthian kings had used; but we are embarrassed enough in attempting to define the properties and advantages of each of these odoriferous cosmetics. All the cosmetics, however, did not commend themselves by their good odor; for example, if one wishes, up to an advanced age, to preserve a firm, white and polished belly, one rubbed it not only with bean-flour, with the leaves of the blight, boiled and salted, but also with urine; women after childbirth did not fail, Pliny tells us, to remove, with fermentations of urine, the wrinkles and spots which altered the purity of their bellies (*aequor ventris*). They had, also, an absolute confidence in the efficacy of ass's milk as a means of whitening the skin. It is recalled

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\*Halitosis.

that Poppaea took every day a milk bath, furnished by fifty asses, which gave out after a few days and which had to be constantly replaced in order that their milk might be always fresh. Since all the Roman ladies were not able to keep asses in their stables, the perfumers had hit upon the idea of condensing the milk of the ass into an ointment and of selling it in solid tablets, which were melted upon being exposed upon the skin. "And yet, hideous to see," says Juvenal, in sketching for us the portrait of a rich coquette, "her face is ridiculously covered with a sort of paste; it exhales the odor of the sticky cosmetics of Poppaea, and these stick to the lips of her poor husband. She bathes herself in milk, and in order to procure this milk, she would keep in her suite a troop of asses, even if she were exiled to the hyperbolean pole. But this face, to which so many different drugs have been applied, and which is covered with a thick crust of baked and liquid flour, should one call it a face or an ulcer?" These epigrams, these insults and maledictions of the poets did not prevent the elderly women of Rome from rouging themselves, from covering themselves with red and white, from dyeing their hair and retaining, as long as possible, the traces of their fugitive beauty; they turned then with a sort of despair to the last illusions which the art of cosmetics might still have to offer them, seeking to deceive themselves concerning the irreparable disasters of age. Courtezans in the mode, the famosae and the preciosae especially, dared not grow old, and old age in a woman began at thirty years among the Romans, who cared only for extreme youth and even infancy. One of the priestesses of Venus, named Acco, frightened at the march of the years, which carried with them the freshness of her complexion, the brilliancy of her hair, the enamel of her teeth and the graces of her figure, thought to forget her own metamorphosis by not looking any more in her mirror; but one day a lover, whom she had tired with complaints and reproaches, presented her with a fatal mirror, in which she, all of a sudden, saw her decrepitude; her hair was white, her toothless mouth half open and her eyes were fixed as they filled

with tears; she was insane, frightened at her own ugliness; she died from the sight of what decrepitude had done to her. Her name was perpetuated in the memory of mothers who, to break their children of the habit of picking the skin off their faces, picking their noses with their fingers and pulling out their eyebrows, would threaten them with the wrath of Acco, as with that of a scarecrow.

The sagae and the perfumers did not limit themselves to dealing in perfumes and cosmetics; they sold, also, all the objects and all the utensils which might be of use in prostitution: whips, needles, fibulae, and chastity-clasps, amulets, phalli and a quantity of the gewgaws of libertinism, which antiquity in its greatest depravation has not dared to describe. If the Fathers of the Church, St. Augustine, Lactantius, Tertullian, Arnobius, etc., had not divulged the unheard-of turpitudes of Roman debauchery, we should hesitate to believe that these monstrous refinements had existed, without the law endeavoring to extinguish and punish them. Thus, it was not merely in the lupanars that employment was made of the *fascinum*, a factitious phallus of leather, cloth or silk which served to deceive nature; it was to be found also in the sleeping chambers of matrons whose husbands neglected them and who did not dare expose themselves to the perils of adultery; it was to be found in the secret assemblies of Lesbian love; it was to be found in the public baths; it was to be found in the sanctuary of the domestic fireside. St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Romans, bears witness to the progress which the doctrines of Sappho had made at Rome, when he says, in speaking of the unworthy descendants of Scipio and Cato: "God has given them over to the passions of ignominy; for women have changed the natural use of the man for a use which is against nature, and like men, abandoning the natural use of the woman, they have embraced impure desires one toward another, accomplishing the infamy of the male with the male and receiving, as must be, into themselves the chastisement of their error." (*Propterea tradidit illos Deus in passiones ignominiae. Nam foemi-*

*nae eorum immutaverunt naturalem usum in eum usum qui est contra naturam. Similiter autem et masculi, relicto naturali usu foeminae, exarserunt in desideriis suis invicem, masculi in masculos turpitudinem operantes, et mercedem quam oportuit erroris sui in semetipsis recipientes).* We shall remark, apropos of this celebrated passage from the Apostle, that this recompense, or rather this chastisement, which the guilty received into themselves could not have been anything else than one of those frightful maladies of the anus, which were so common among the paedicones and the cinaedes of Rome. Finally, the obscene fascina, which were made and sold in the perfumers' quarter, in the barber shops and the houses of old courtezans, were sometimes put into service to sharpen the slothful senses of aged debauchees; we do not feel that we have the courage to translate this text of Petronius, even by disguising it: *Profert Enothea scorteum fascinum, quod uo oleo et minuto atque uticae trito circumdedit semine, paulatim coepit inserere ano meo.* How had libertinism been able to conceive this irritating mixture of pepper and grains of nettle, reduced to a powder and diluted with olive oil? We can divine all the organic accidents which might result from this infernal topic, and which were, undoubtedly, a part of that chastisement which the guilty received into themselves, according to St. Paul.

It is permissible to suppose that the sagae and the perfumers took upon themselves certain operations, equally shameful in nature and purpose, although an attempt had been made to have them authorized by medicine and executed by physicians: the castration of women and the infibulation of the two sexes. "A number of surgeons," says Celsus, "are in the habit of submitting their young patients to infibulation, and this in the interest of their voices or their health. This operation is carried out thus: the prepuce is drawn forward and, after the opposite points where it is desired to make an incision have been marked in ink, the teguments are allowed to fall back upon themselves. The prepuce is then pierced, at the point designated, with a needle containing a thread, with two knotted ends, which is moved each

day until the subject has been well cicatrized. When this result has been obtained, the thread is replaced by a buckle, the lighter the better. Nevertheless, this operation is more often futile than necessary. (*Sed hoc quidem saepius inter super vacua, quam inter necessari est.*)” Celsus does not dare protest against this detestable invention, which the most scandalous jealousy had caused to be adopted under pretext of preserving the voice of these young slaves at the moment of puberty, and sometimes, for the purpose of preserving them from the bad habit of nocturnal pollutions. This buckle (*fibula*) which prevented the patient from committing the act of virility, was of gold or silver, sometimes soldered in the fire, sometimes fastened by a spring. What proves the true destination of these fibulae is the fact that they were equally adapted for the anus, by means of an operation analogous to the one which Celsus describes. As to the infibulation of women, which was modified in the Middle Ages through the creation of chastity clasps, it was practiced in very nearly the same manner as that of men, and the ring or fibula, which held the sexual parts half closed, traversed the extremity of the great lips and was only opened with the aid of a key. Nothing was more common than the infibulation of slaves of masculine sex; but for slaves of the other sex, use was made by preference of a particular vestment, called *subliger* or *subligaculum*, which was laced in the rear, and which formed a species of protecting aegis for those covered with this cincture of leather or padded horse-hair. An ancient custom demanded that actresses should not appear upon the stage, out of respect for the modesty of spectators, without being clad in drawers which obviated all accident and assured the modesty of the matrons: *Scenicorum mos quidem tantam habet*, we read in the treatise, *De Officiis, vetere disciplinâ verecundiam, ut in scenam sine subligaculo prodeat nemo*. An epigram of Martial informs us that respectable women piqued themselves on their precaution in wearing the *subligar* everywhere: “Public rumor has it, Chione, that you have never known a man, and that nothing is purer than your virginity. And yet, you

hide it more than you should when you bathe. If you are so modest, transfer the *subligar* to your face!" Martial speaks elsewhere of a cincture of black leather, which male slaves attached about their loins when they accompanied their master or mistress to the baths, (*inguina succinctus nigra tibi servus alutâ stat*) ; but in another epigram, he shows us an infibulated slave bathing with his mistress: "His member covered with a capsule of grass, a slave bathes with you, Coelia. Why that, I ask you, since this slave is neither a *citharoedus* nor a singer? Undoubtedly, you do not wish to see what he is like? Then, why bathe in the sight of everyone? Are we, then, all eunuchs for you? Do not be jealous of your slave, Coelia; remove his fibula."

Finally, as we have said, it was in the shops where impurities and spells were sold that the castration of women was practiced. We have no precise information as to the manner of this castration, which had for object the sterilization of the unfortunate ones who were mutilated by it. This cruel and futile operation, which was first practiced by the Lydians, if we are to believe the historian, Xanthus of Lydia, has even been looked upon as a fable. According to an ancient scholiast, the operation consisted in removing the small glands situated at the entrance of the neck of the matrix, glands which the ancients looked upon as testacles necessary to generation. Sometimes, the cutting away of these glands was replaced by compressing them with a finger. The girls who submitted to this barbaric treatment, as though they were chickens being fattened for the table, (*simili modo, says Pierrugues, Itali et Gallo-provinciales gallinas eunuthant*) saw themselves, thus, deprived forever of the joys of maternity, but, on the other hand, they became more apt in the labors of Venus through their ignorance of those of Juno. Moreover, this species of castration was not very frequent, except for those girls destined for Prostitution in the lupanars, who, it was believed, were thus protected from pregnancies and abortions. We have read, nevertheless, on the subject of this mysterious operation which women of pleasure had to undergo in their infancy, we have read, in a

learned rhetorician of the sixteenth century, that this operation, practiced on chosen subjects, by reason of their particular conformation, completely changed the sex of the victims and caused to project from the organ those parts which are ordinarily enclosed, in such a manner that this female eunuch (*eunuchata*) had the appearance, if not the sex, of a man. The castration of men and children was less complicated and infinitely more widespread; it was even abused, until Domitian was obliged to forbid it, except in certain privileged cases. It was not physicians, especially physicians of renown, who performed these hideous mutilations which cupidity and debauchery had multiplied; it was the barbers, it was the bathhouse keepers, it was, more especially, the sagae and their horrible following who labored in behalf of the slave merchants, the keepers of lupanars and the lenons. There was need of such a quantity of eunuchs at Rome in order to satisfy the demands of fashion and libertinism that infamous lenae pursued no other industry than that of stealing children to make of them castrati, spadones, or thlibiae. "Domitian," says Martial, "does not stand for such horrors; he forbids a pitiless libertinism to make a race of sterile men (*ne faceret steriles saeva libido viros*)."<sup>1</sup> The odious authors and accomplices of these crimes were condemned to the mines, to exile and often to death.

But, the strange thing is, superstition remained in possession of the atrocious privilege which the imperial edict had denied to slave vendors and the agents of debauchery; the priests of Cybele continued not only to mutilate themselves with potsherds, but they also practiced the same violence on the unfortunate children who fell into their hands. These *galli*, the majority of them vile debauchees and the hopeless victims of shameful maladies, were called *semiviri*, and pretended to sacrifice to the goddess the gangrenous remains of their absent virility. When they had nothing left to offer Cybele, they would go to seek impure offerings by seizing upon the first comers who would yield themselves without resistance to their knives. Martial has put into verse an adven-

ture which happened in his day, and which bears witness to the baleful superstition of the galli. We shall borrow this translation from the great collection of Latin authors published by M. Désiré Nisard, professor at the *École Normale*: "When Misitius reached the territory of Ravenna, his native country, he met a troop of those men, who are but half-men, the priests of Cybele. He had for traveling companion the young Achillas, a fugitive slave of the most attractive beauty and gentleness. The castrates informed themselves of the place where he slept; but suspecting some ruse, the youth replied with a lie. They believed him, and each one went to sleep, after they had drunk. Then the wicked band, seizing an iron, mutilated the old man who was sleeping on the front of the couch, while the young lad, hidden in the rear, was sheltered from their attacks." These abominable priests of Cybele took part in all the infamies of the Tuscan town; all trades were good to them, and, always under the influence of wine, always half mad, always obscene, they seemed to have made a cult of the dirtiest debauchery and to have desired to replace the Prostitution of women with that of eunuchs. It is thus that Juvenal pictures for us the great spado (*semivir*), entering the house of a matron at the head of a fanatic choir of galli, armed with drums and trumpets. This personage, whose venerable face was vowed to obscene complacencies, (*obsceno facies reverenda minori*) and who, a long time before, had cut away with a potsherds the half of his genital parts, wore the Phrygian tiara of the courtezans and piqued himself on rivalling the latter by serving at once the pleasures of both sexes.

The sagae, the magicians, the poisoners, and all the feminine auxiliaries to Roman debauchery, were less blameworthy and less odious than these hermaphroditic priests who dishonored the pagan religion.



## CHAPTER XXII

WE CANNOT form an exact and complete idea of what debauchery in Roman society was like if we turn away our gaze from those lubricious scenes which are painted with a sort of naïveté by the author of the *Satyricon*. Petronius has portrayed faithfully what took place every day, almost publicly, in the capital of the Empire, although, in order to make his allusions seem more distant, he has chosen Naples for the scene of his strange and picturesque romance, devoted to the history of debauchery and Prostitution under the reign of Nero. Petronius was a fine voluptuary, an excellent judge, (whence his nickname, *arbiter*), in the matter of affairs of pleasure; he relates, in a flowery and figurative style, the greatest turpitudes, and we must believe that he wrote in accordance with his impressions and personal memories. It will suffice, then, to take all the pictures, all the information, all the mysteries of libertinism which are to be found accumulated in the fragments of this erotic and sodatic composition, if we wish to have under our eyes a faithful picture of the private life of young Romans. The practical philosophy of these indefatigable debauchees, was summed up in this sentence of the *Trimalchion*: *Vivamus, dum licet esse!* That is to say: "Let us lead a joyous life so long as it is given us to live!" The verb *vivere* had taken on the signification much larger and less specialized than when it was merely applied to the fact of material existence, and when it had not yet come to be applied to one manner of life rather than to another. The delicates of Rome (*delicati*) had no difficulty in persuading themselves that to live without pleasure was not to live at all and that to enjoy oneself always was really to live, *vivere*. The women of easy manners, in whose company they lived their lives, could understand in no other fashion the meaning of this verb, which philolo-

gists themselves took at its new acceptation. It was in this sense that Varro employed *vivere* when he said: "Hasten to live, young woman, you whom adolescence permits to take pleasure, to eat, to love and to ride in the chariot of Venus (*Venerisque tenere bigas*)."<sup>1</sup> To establish still better this nice expansion of the sense of *vivere*, a voluptuary of the school of Petronius wrote upon the tomb of a companion in pleasure: *Dum vivimus vivamas*, which it is almost impossible to translate: "So long as we live, let us enjoy life." Moreover, this life of perpetual pleasure had become so general among the patrician youth that it was adjudged necessary to give them a particular goddess to protect them. This goddess, if we go back to the etymology of Festus, drew her name, *Vitula*, from the word *vita*, or the joyous life over which she was to preside. Vitula had undoubtedly no other cult than that which was paid to her before the altar of the domestic gods, in the cubiculum or in the triclinium, where one had most occasion to invoke her. Thanks to this goddess, one soon came to say *vitulari* in place of *vivere*, and we are inclined to suppose that *vitulare* signified to live couched at table or in a bed, as idly as a heifer (*vitula*) amid the grass of the field.

The voluptuaries, as a matter of fact, passed their lives in no other manner than this. "He gave the day to sleeping," says Tacitus, in speaking of Petronius, the most celebrated example of his species, "he gave the night to the duties of society and to pleasure. He won for himself a reputation by his idleness as others do by force of toil. In the opinion of all the dissipated ones who won renown from disorder and debauchery, Petronius was esteemed the most clever voluptuary."<sup>2</sup> We are astonished that a few energetic and active natures were able to carry on business, studies and politics along with the incessant pleasures which devoured their lives. What freedom of mind and action could men have had who slept by day and who at night exhausted themselves in terrifying orgies? Those night festivals, those suppers, which were prolonged till sunrise, and which gave rise to the most monstrous excesses, were called *comessationes* or *comis-*

*sationes*. This word, essentially Latin, which does not derive from the Greek, *romein*, to nourish, nor from *rome*, the hair, nor from *romise*, nourishment, etc., had been formed from *comes* and properly implied a companionship, a gathering of friends and good companions. We should be ashamed to advance the opinion here, although with much probability, that this hybrid word, always taken in bad part, was the source of the word *missa*, the mass, for the reason that the first Christians assembled by night in secret places to celebrate the sacred mysteries of their cult and to approach the holy table in communion. It is certain that the profane comessations which took place during the night, and which admitted all the means of pleasure, all the forms of enjoyment, all the experiments of lust, amply merited the horror which they inspired in wise men and in the mothers of families. These were not only succulent and copious feasts, at which one gorged oneself with viands and with wine, where one did not cease eating and drinking till one had fallen dead drunk; they were, too often, frightful conventicles of debauchery, the theatres and arenas of obscenity and the abominable sanctuaries of Prostitution. One could not enumerate, without disgust and stupefaction, all that took place during the long nocturnal hours of the comessation, amid musical concerts, lascivious songs, obscene dances, immodest remarks and indecent cries and laughter. Suetonius, Tacitus and the authors of the *History of Augustus*, constantly dramatized the infamies which took place at these comessations in the palace of the Caesars. Cicero, in his plea for Coelius, puts adulteries and comessations on the same footing (*libidines, amores, adulteria, convivia, comessationes*). A respectable man might forget himself, sometimes, in an orgy of this sort, but he did not boast of having taken part in it, and he would often blush at having been the spectator, and sometimes the accomplice, of these outbursts.

The fashion of comessations was contemporary with the invasion of Rome by Asiatic lust; it began when Rome, like the debilitated peoples of the Orient, began to recline on cushions

and couches to take her meals. Up to that time, everyone had eaten seated upright, and even the chair on which one sat was not too soft; the women themselves sat on wooden benches or tripods. "They are called chairs (*sedes dictae*)," says Isadore in his *Etymologies*, "because among the ancient Romans the custom was not to eat reclining but to sit at table; but soon the men began to recline upon couches before the tables," while the women alone remained seated, which caused Valerius Maximus to say: "Austere manners are preserved by the present generation more scrupulously in the Capitolium, at the sacred repasts given in honor of Jupiter, than in the interior of their houses." Women permitting themselves to imitate the men by reclining at table committed an act of immodesty and indicated thereby that they would not stop at this oversight of the conventions. At the joyous supper at which Cicero did not disdain to take his place beside the Greek courtezan, Clytheris, that beautiful *precieuse* indulged in no affectation about reclining on an ivory couch, making no pretense to the grave and indecent decorum of a matron, who would have remained seated and who would not have dared even to recline upon her elbow. Plautus shows us, also, other courtezans, Bacchides and her sisters, occupying a single couch at table; sometimes a single couch received guests of different sex, and in this case, they were placed sometimes one opposite another, sometimes one above another, in such a manner that one had his head resting on the breast of the other; sometimes they were stretched out face to face, so close to each other that they might have eaten from the same plate. One sees, thus, the lover and his mistress, the giton and his master, supping side by side and disputing the morsels of food even on each other's lips. Sometimes, also, the woman or the adolescent was crouched behind the man, who occupied the front of the couch and who saw to it that food or wine was passed back in abundance to his male or female companion; the latter, male or female, who had dishonored himself by accepting part of a festal couch, would take, then, a place at the bottom or in the middle of this couch,

which was piled high with soft cushions; and this was called *accumbere interior*, that is to say, to recline in the interior of the couch. A few scholiasts, however, have thought that we ought to read *inferior*, and that this word had allusion to the inferior position which the courtezan or the cinaedus took in reclining her head on the breast of her lover (*in gremio amatoris*): “He who every day perfumes himself and adjusts himself before a mirror,” bitterly exclaimed Scipio Africanus to Sulpitius Gallus, one day, in reproaching the latter for the feminine softness of his manners, “he who shaves his eyebrows, who pulls out the hair from his beard, who depilates his thighs; who, in his youth, clad in a long-sleeved tunic, occupies at the feast the same couch with his corrupter, he who loves not only wine but also boys—can one doubt that such a man does all that the cinaedes are in the habit of doing?” Aulus Gallius, who reports these words of Scipio Africanus, informs us that the Syrian tunic *chiridota*, the sleeves of which covered all the arms and fell over the hand to the end of the fingers, was the ordinary garment of effeminate at the comediations, where they abdicated absolutely all the characteristics of their sex.

One must read, in Petronius, the description of the dinner of Trimalchion in order to picture the numerous episodes of an orgy which lasted an entire night. They did not eat or drink without interruption; there were intermissions of various sorts: first, provocative conversations, obscene or voluptuous; then, music, song, dancing and divertissement of every sort; and, after or during these intermissions, all the disorders which drunkenness or lust might invent. They soon grew tired of actors (*mimi*) who played pantomimes or recited verses; of buffoons and *aretalogi* who held forth on comic subjects; they would listen no longer, except with distraction, and eyes, clouded by the fumes of Bacchus, would begin to close. But suddenly, mountebanks and *danseuses* would come to revive the attention of the fatigued guests by awakening their senses. These *danseuses*, the majority of them from Asia or Egypt, were no other than those who have

preserved in India the tradition of ancient libertinism; they would present themselves nude, or covered merely with gilded or silver veils, a diaphanous covering for their nudity; it is this which Petronius calls being clad in a tissue of air (*indure ventum textilem*) and showing oneself nude in clouds of linen (*prostare nudam in nebula linea*). Mountebanks were clad no more decently, and they displayed their naked members, massaged with odorous oil and laden with rings and jeweled bells. These mountebanks would portray pantomimes, do perilous somersaults, make grimaces and indulge in extraordinary *tours de force*; they never forgot, in their poses, to make all the forms, all the muscles of their body stand out; they accompanied their movements with the most indecent gestures; they gave to their mouths an obscene expression, which they complete by the rapid play of their fingers (*micatio digitum*) in the manner of the Etruscans; they exchanged, thus, mute signs, which always had some more or less direct connection with the shameful act (*turpitudo*); and sometimes, inflamed with lust and excited by the applause of the guests, they would pass from gestures to actions and give themselves to impure combats, imitating the turpitude of those Fauns which are to be seen on the painted vases of Etruria. As to the *danseuses*, they performed dances which a Father of the Christian Church, Arnobius, has described in his book against the Gentiles: "A lubricious troop performed dissolute dances, leapt in disorder and sang, whirling while they danced, and, in keeping with the music, lifting up their thighs and their loins, they would give to the *nates*, in the lumbar region, a rotary motion which would have overcome the coldest spectator." The Jesuit, Boulanger, does not hesitate to say that this obscene shaking and these undulations of the loins communicated to all the guests an amorous itching (*modo nudae, et fluctuantibus lumbis obsceno motu, pruriginem spectantibus conciliabant*).

Martial has left us a sketch of the comissions of the libertine whom he calls Zoilus; and this sketch, although considerably weakened in the classical translation which has recently been pub-

lished by M. Désiré Nisard, is still more Latin than all the descriptions from which we might make a fanciful picture: "Whoever would be the guest of Zoilus must also sup with the meretrices of Summoenium, and drink with *sang-froid* in the notched bidet of Leda. I even assume that, with them, this is looked upon as more proper and more decent. Clad in a green robe, he is extended on the couch which he has been the first to take; he piles up the cushions of scarlet silk, and elbows to the right and to the left his neighbors at table. As soon as he has taken his place, one of his gitons, warned by his hiccoughs, presents him with rose-colored shells and toothpicks of lentisk. If he is warm, a concubine, reclining nonchalantly on her back, refreshes him gently with the aid of a green fan, while a young slave chases the flies away with a branch of myrtle. A masseuse (*tractatrix*) rapidly passes her hand over his body and artfully rubs each of his members. When he claps his hand, a eunuch, who recognizes this signal, and who knows how to incite with address the emission of urine, guides the drunken mentula of his master, who does not cease his drinking (*domini bibentis ebrium regit penem*). The latter, moreover, bending toward the group of slaves ranged at his feet, among the little bitches who are licking the entrails of a goose, shares among his valets of the palestra the kidneys of a wild boar and gives to his bed-companion (*concubino*) the rump of turtledoves. And while they poured for us wine from the hills of Liguria, or from the smoky mountain of Massalia, he distributes to his buffoons the nectar of Opimius, in vials of crystal and in murrhine vases. He himself, all perfumed with essences of Cosmos, does not blush to share with us, in a gold shell, the pomade of which the prostitutes made use. Succumbing, finally, to his multiple libations, he falls asleep. As for us, we remain couched on our beds, and, having been ordered to keep silent while he snores away, we drink each other's health with signs." Petronius, in his *Cena Trimalchionis*, shows us another phase of the subject, the disorders which occurred among the women at these conversations: "Fortunata, the wife of Trimalcione, came

then, her robe drawn back by a green girdle in such a manner as to reveal, above her cerise tunic, her gold-fringed garters and her gilded slippers. Her hands playing with the kerchief which she wore about her neck, she took her place on the couch with the wife of Habinnas, Scintilla, who clapped her hands and whom she embraced. . . . These two women did nothing but laugh and mingle their drunken kisses, and Scintilla proclaimed her friend the housewife par excellence, while the other complained of her little ones and of her husband's lack of attention. While they were embracing in this manner, Habinnas rose up stealthily, seized Fortunata by the feet, which she held out in front of her, and pulled her head over heels off the couch (*pedesque Fortunatae porrectos super lectum immisit*). ‘Ha, ha!’ she cried, feeling her tunic slipping over her knees; and readjusting it as quickly as possible, she hid in the breast of Scintilla a face made still more indecent by its blushes.”

The comessations, moreover, assumed the most varied character, depending on the imagination of the prodigious debauchee who was giving the fete, and reflecting more or less the tastes and habits of the master of the place. But they had, always, as principal object the exciting to the highest degree of the senses of the guest and the leading of them on to unbelieved excesses. Thus, sometimes, the table service was a brazen provocation to an act of nature, and on whatever side the eyes rested they met nothing but voluptuously obscene images. The walls were covered with paintings, in which the artist had reproduced, without veils, all the inventions of venereal genius. “The man whose hand first painted such obscene pictures,” cries the tender Propertius, “and he who first suspended these shameful images in a respectable house, corrupted thereby the innocent gaze of youth and must have desired to prevent it from remaining a novice in those disorders with which it thus became acquainted; let him forswear his art forever, the painter who first reproduced for our gaze those amorous contests, the mystery of which is all the pleasure!” These paintings evoked by preference the most monstrous scenes

of mythology: Pasiphae and the bull, Leda and the swan, Ganymede and the eagle, Glaucus and the mares, Danae and the rain of gold. In treating these sacred subjects, the artist had sought to translate, under the names of gods and goddesses, the gross and material sensations which it had been the pleasure of poets of love to describe. It was, ordinarily, the infamous poem of Elephantis which furnished the postures and the colors for these mythologic episodes. The furnishings of the hall and its decoration were often in harmony with the paintings; dances of satyrs, bacchanalia, erotic shepherd scenes ran in bas-relief around the cornices; statues in bronze and marble represented satyrs at grips with nymphs, those eternal victims of these half-gods of the woods; the couches, the tables, the chairs, had goat's feet and goat's heads for ornaments, as though by allusion to the famous verses in the bucolics of Virgil: *tuentibus hircis*. A lamp suspended from the ceiling, the candelabra placed on the supper table, recalled by some ithyphallic form, often pleasing and ingenious, the principal object of the gathering. Here was a Love riding horseback (*equitans*) on an enormous phallus, provided with wings and feet;\* there were birds or turtledoves picking away at the priapus; again, a garland formed of the attributes of the god of generation; again, animals, plants, insects, butterflies, all sharing the same hieratic form. As to the goblets, the amphorae, the utensils of the table, whether they were in glass, in terra cotta or in metal, they wore, so to speak, the same general livery, and they approached more or less closely in their configuration the indecent emblem which presided over the comensation. That is why Juvenal shows us a *comissator* drinking from a priapus of glass (*vitreo bibit ille priapo*). This is what Pliny gravely calls obscene drinking, *biber per obscenitates*. The bread which was eaten at these libidinous meals preserved a form no more decent than that of the drinking vases: the *coliphia* and the *cunni siliginei*, made of pure wheat flour, succeeded each other in the mouths of the guests, who soon had not a thought

\*Cf. Marquis De Bayross and others.

that was foreign to the god of the fete: "You know," the host of the comessation might have remarked, making use of the words of the Quartilla of Petronius, "you know that the whole night belongs to the cult of Priapus." (*Sciatis Priapi genio pervigilium deberi*).

In this cult were included the erotic healths which each one drank in his turn during these interminable orgies. They drank almost always to the happy success of amours and the great exploits of lovers. They emptied as many beakers as there were letters in the name of the loved person. Martial speaks of this general custom in one of his prettiest epigrams: "Drink five beakers to Nedia, seven to Justine, five to Lycas, four to Lyde, three to Ida; toss off the Falernian as many times as there are letters in the name of each of these ladies. But since none of them comes, do you come to me, Sleep." A buffoon of the table, the famous Galba, who took upon himself the task of enlivening all the suppers to which he was invited, proposed a health to his mignon, whose name, he said, was enough to intoxicate the gods of Olympus; in short, it was necessary to drink twenty-seven times in succession, for he had given to this favored slave the celebrated name forged by Plautus to describe a miser: *Thesaurochrysonicochrysides*. We cannot say whether it was at this same supper that Galba gave proof of a remarkable presence of mind and a remarkable cynicism. He had been invited there with his wife, who was very beautiful and of very complacent manners. The master of the house had placed the lady next himself, and at the end of the repast, when all the guests had fallen asleep under the heavy poppies of Bacchus, he drew near the sleeping lady and did all that was necessary to awake her. She did not awake, however, but gave herself without resistance. Scurra\* was not asleep, although he appeared to be, but left the field free to his Mecaenas, when a slave, believing in this simulated sleep, drew near the couch of Galba and began to drink out of his glass. "I do not sleep for everyone!" exclaimed the buf-

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\*Generic name for jester.

foon, seizing the knave by the ear. In these nocturnal orgies, everything served as a pretext for new healths and for new goblets of wine, which were often the echoes or the forerunners of amorous combats of the morrow or the night before. The number of these combats was reckoned by the number of crowns of flowers which were placed before a statuette of Hercules, of Priapus or of Venus. These crowns of flowers played a great role in all the circumstances in which drunkenness, of wine and of the senses, had need at once of a stimulus and a preservative. The odor of flowers tempered the fumes of the juice of the vine, and, at the same time, they exalted the inspirations of pleasure. Pliny assures us that the great drinkers, in crowning themselves with odorous flowers, freed themselves from giddiness and headaches. There was, therefore, no orgy without crowns for the head, without flowers strewing the table and the floor. One judged from the beauty and the abundance of these crowns the liberality and the good taste of the commissator. The day after a supper, the courtesans and the "meritorious" children (*meritorii*) who had assisted at it would send their crowns, trampled and broken, to their lenons as an evidence that they had done their duty (*in signum paratae Veneris*, says an old commentator of Apuleius).

Finally, these comessations and the shameful acts to which they gave rise, took place under the auspices of certain gods and certain goddesses, who had been turned for this purpose from their decent attributes, or who had been born in full orgy and in the debauch of a religious imagination. At the dinner of Trimalchio, two slaves, clad in white tunics, entered the dining hall and placed on the table the lares of the place, while a third slave, holding a pitcher of wine, made a tour of the table crying: "May our gods be propitious." These gods were called Industry, Happiness and Profit. But Petronious passes over in silence the true divinities who presided at these nocturnal feasts, and who took part in them under different names. There was, first of all and above all, Comus, who found in part his name in the joyous Comessations prepared and celebrated under his auspices; he was repre-

sented as young, his face illuminated, his forehead crowned with roses. His name had been formed from the word *comes*, companion, from which sprang, naturally, the word, *commissari* to make good cheer among companions. The libertine youth who went by night with torch and hatchets to break down the doors and break in the windows of courtezans, would invoke Comus and pride themselves on being enrolled under his bacchic banner; but this turbulent crowd, whom the aedile condemned to a fine and even to the lash, found no excuse in the evil reputation of the god whom they had taken for their chief. Venus, Hercules, Priapus, Isis, Hebe and Cupid were also the tutelary gods of these comessations. Cupid, who differed from Love, the son of Venus and of Mars; Cupid, whom Saint Augustine deifies under the title of *Deus copulationis* was the son of Chaos and of the Earth according to Hesiod; of Venus and of the Heavens, according to Sappho; of the Night and the Ether, according to Archesilaus; of Discord and of Zephyr, according to Alceus; he reigned, above all, at the end of suppers; Hebe, who poured nectar and immortality for the guests of Olympus, had to have some indulgence for mortals gathered at table. Isis, whom the impious had nicknamed the tutelary goddess (*praefecta*) of meretrices and of lenons, was looked upon as the best counselor among the gods of love. Venus, Priapus and Hercules aided Isis in the protection which she gave to lovers. There was *Venus Volupia*, *Pandemos* and *Lubentia*; there was Hercules, *Bibax*, *Buphagus*, *Pamphagus* and *Rusticus*; there was Priapus, the god of Lampsacum, and Pantheus, the soul of the universe.

By the side of these great gods, who possessed a proper place in the pantheon of paganism, and who only presided over feasts by complacency, there was a cortege of little obscure gods who had no temple in the sun, and who would not have dared to appear elsewhere than on the altar of the lares of the place. These gods often owed their fugitive existence only to a drunken whim, or to the fancy of a lover. As to their appearance, it was what the

good pleasure of the inventor dictated, who drew from his own ideas the physiognomy and the attributes of these little divinities. the majority of them grotesque, ridiculous and hideous. Immense archeologic researches would be required to reconstruct the theogony of the lares of debauchery. The first to attract our attention is Conisalus of Athenian origin, a diminutive of Priapus, who presided over the perspiration (*Konisalos*) provoked by amorous contests. He was represented under the form of a phallus, mounted on the feet of a goat and having the head of a horned Faun. The god Tryphallus, to whom one prayed in difficult enterprises, was but a little bit of a man who bore a *membrum virile* as tall as his bonnet and who had the air of holding himself as upright as a spear. Pilumnus and Picumnus, the guardian deities of women in childbirth, were singularly equipped by nature. The first, whose name was derived from *pilum*, a pile, according to St. Augustine, personified a certain obscenity; Picumnus, brother of the foregoing, had the name and face of a green wood-pecker, a bird with a long beak which makes holes in the trunks of trees in order to make its nest there. Three goddesses of very low rank, Deverra, Deveronna and Intercidona, to whom pregnant women also commended themselves, were not indifferent to the mysteries of love: Intercidona held a hatchet; Deverra held wands; Deveronna held a broom. Viriplaca, goddess of conjugal accommodations, had appeared so useful to the Romans that they accorded her the honor of a chapel at Rome, but she was adored, above all, in the interior of the menage, and it was in front of her statue that the quarrels of wedded pairs and lovers were ended, without their needing to go to the Palatine Hill in order to seek the protection of that conciliatory goddess. We are in entire ignorance as to what was her allegoric countenance. The god Domiducus, who accompanied brides to the home of their bridegrooms, performed the same service for mistresses and for mignons. It is believed that we must recognize this accommodating god in a little statuette of bronze, which represents a villager clad in a cape with a hood, under which his head is entirely hid-

den; when this mobile cape is raised, it gives a view of a priapus with human legs. The goddess Suadela, whose mission it was to persuade; the goddess Orbana who had orphans under her care; the goddess Genita-Mana, whose duty it was to prevent children from being deformed and misshapen; the goddesses, Postversa and Prorsa, who watched over the position of the foetus in the belly of the mother; the goddess Cuba-Dea, who was interested in anyone in childbed; the god Thalassus or Thalassio, who had jurisdiction over the bed and all that it included; a hoard of other gods and goddesses also received offerings and invocations when the voluptuaries believed that they had need of their aid. Angerona, placed by the side of Venus Volupia, prescribed silence by placing her finger on her mouth; and Fauna, the favorite goddess of matrons, was there to cover with a discreet veil all that was not to be seen by the profane. Finally, if there had been a union of the two sexes and an accomplishment of natural laws, one poured wine on the obscene face of the god Jugatinus: "*Quum maset foemina conjunguntur,*" says Flavius Blondus in his book, *Rome Triumphant*, "*adhibetur deus Jugatinus.*" St. Augustine, in his *City of God*, limits the attributes of Jugatinus to assisting bridal couples in the work of marriage.

## CHAPTER XXIII

THE Roman people were the most superstitious of all peoples, and with them, the most superstitious of all were the men and women who, by taste, from habit or by profession, had enfeebled body and soul in the arts of debauchery (*stupri artes*) and in erratic manners of all sorts. We may understand that the fear of the gods and preoccupation with the future disturbed, in the midst of their orgies, these libertines, whose consciences were awakened but seldom, and then as though by chance; we may understand that those mercenary beings who shamefully trafficked in themselves and who expected from this horrible traffic their daily lucre would naturally be anxious to know whether the day or the night were going to be propitious, and if their fate were going to send them some favorable chance. As to lovers, they constantly had need of foresight in the vast field of their cares and hopes; they forged for themselves a thousand chimaeras, and they had need at every moment of creating a security or yielding to an anxiety equally factitious, in order to satisfy the dominant thought which was tormenting them. Hence, their continual observation of signs, that constant search for the means of knowing and directing destiny, that fanatic passion for all the occult and shady sciences. What might be called the world of love at Rome had but one religion, which consisted of the most credulous and active superstition; but this superstition, in this world of sensual pleasures and nameless disorders, presented characteristics quite different from those of superstition in general, which did not make use of auspices, horoscopes, fates and evil spells for the sake of love and libertinism. All the Romans, from children to old men, the women as well as the men, the wisest as well as the simplest, were equally sensitive to omens and equally subject to signs, good or bad, in the least actions of their

lives. Those persons who made of sensual pleasure their chief business in life were still more susceptible in the face of these pretended warnings of destiny. The knowledge and the appreciation of omens formed a veritable art, which had its names and its principles; it was called *clledonistica*; and in this science, full of imperceptible nuances, the chapter on love was longer and more detailed than all the others.

It was an evil omen to utter or to listen to obscene words; that is why these words were banished even from the reunions of debauchees and prostitutes, in accordance with a proverb which is to be found in all ages and among all peoples: "To do is good, to say is bad." One had no need, therefore, to be scrupulous with regard to his actions; but one carefully avoided expressing those actions in words; one did not describe them, one did not name them. Plautus says, in his comedy of the *Servant (Casina)*: "To indulge in obscene speech is to bring evil on those who listen." (*Obscenare, omen alicui vitiperare*). Lucius Accius had said also, in his tragedy, the *Oenomaus*: "Go into the fields and publish it through the town, with the greatest care, that all the citizens who dwell in the citadel, in order to win the favor of the gods by means of happy omens, must put out of their mouths every obscene word (*ore obscena segregent*)."<sup>1</sup> It is, then, quite certain that the vilest *pierreuses* the most infamous *mascariones*,<sup>2</sup> the most brazen libertines would abstain from oral obscenities; but they made themselves understood by means of those gestures which were of so much eloquence at Rome and which composed so rich a silent vocabulary. They had such a horror of obscene words, of expressions of evil augury that they never pronounced the word *urinal* or *pot de chambre (vas urinarium)*, while the physicians themselves employed a decent periphrasis in speaking of urine (*urina*), which, however, found its way into the epigrams of Martial. At the comessations, where the urinary vase played an obligatory role, the guests who made use of it at table and under the eyes of all, demanded it of a slave by clapping

<sup>1</sup>*Mascarpio*: an onanist.

the hands (*digitis crepitantis signa*). Sometimes one cracked a finger at the joint when one did not wish to attract the attention of his neighbors and when the slave could see this sign, which only produced a very slight noise. Then, in satisfying this natural need (*urinam solvere*, says Pliny), one took care to give an omen by the noise of the urine striking the side of the vase; this omen, according to the noise it made in falling, might be interpreted in various manners. Juvenal pictures for us, with contempt, a rich gourmand who rejoiced at the resonance of a gold vase under the spray of his urine. This vase, which Plautus permits himself to mention frequently in his comedies, in order to make the Roman populace laugh, was called *matula*, *matela* and *scaphium*. This last was especially destined for women, who hid it from the eyes of their husbands and their lovers; there is a lack of agreement as to the form of the *scaphium*, which was, undoubtedly, often obscene and ithyphallic. As to the *matula*, it was an enormous metal basin, over the orifice of which one might sit, and which took the place of a wardrobe. The *matela*, on the contrary, served only for portable uses and afforded but a mediocre capacity, which a good drinker (*compotator*) would refill a number of times in the course of a supper. The lexicographers make no distinction between these three sorts of vases, when they give one definition for all: "The vase in which we relieve the bladder is sometimes called *matela* and sometimes *scaphium*." The name of this vase was employed figuratively, with an obscene sense which, and this is the remarkable thing, has passed into all modern languages. Plautus had described, very clearly, this impure image, when he said, in his *Mostellaria*: "By Hercules! If you do not give me the pot, I shall make use of you (*tam Hercole! ego vos pro matula hagebo, nisi matulam datis*)."<sup>1</sup> Persius, by another allusion, also figuratively employs the word *matula* in the sense of *stupid*, for the reason that the *pot de chambre* receives everything and complains of nothing: *Numquam ego tam esse matulam credidi* ("I never thought that I also was a *pot de chambre!*" if we are to translate the phrase literally, with the spirit

of our language). As to the etymology of *matula*, it must, undoubtedly, be sought in *mentula*. The urine, which Seneca, describes by respectable circumlocutions (*aqua immunda, humor obscenus*), was, thus, material for auguries, according to whether it spurted forth quickly, intermittently, by threads, by jerks or by sheets. An abundant and easy evacuation of this *obscene liquid*, before a sacrifice to Venus, announced the happy accomplishment of this sacrifice, in the course of which the word *urina* took on a new sense, figurative and still more obscene. Juvenal is very near to giving it this sense, when he says that at sight of the lascivious dancers of Spain, sensual pleasure insinuates itself by the eyes and ears and puts into ebullition the urine which fills the bladder: *Et mox auribus atque oculis concepta urina movetur.*

These urinatory auguries took place especially at the comeditions, where might be heard, at every instant, the snapping of an impatient finger, and where they sometimes brought to the table a statuette of Hercules Urinator, in order to expand the loins and calm the kidneys of the guests. No less importance attached to the auguries of ructation, which we call a belch in trivial language, to which this incongruity has been relegated. The Romans, the great eaters especially, did not think as we do on this subject. There were belches of good augury, which all the guests applauded; there were also those which were sufficient to cast a shadow over and disarrange a feast. It would be difficult today to define the belches of good and evil omen, but in any case, the *ructus* was not looked upon as a lack of *savoir-vivre*. No constraint was imposed on these noisy and disagreeable explosions of a stomach storm, since they had apotheosized, under the name of *crepitus*, those vapors, those interior winds, which escaped with *éclat* from the mouth or from the lower regions. Cicero, in his familiar *Letters*, does not blush to boast of the wisdom of the Stoics, who pretended that the complaints of the belly and the stomach should not be overlooked (*stoici crepitus aiunt aequae liberos ac ructus esse oportere*). The ancients had, in this respect, different ideas from ours. They looked upon as good or

evil the noises made by these belchings, and they drew from them auguries with an imperturbable gravity. One must have been a Roman in order not to take flight at this verse from a comedy of Plautus: *Quid lubet? Pergin' ructare in os mihi?* "Is it your pleasure to continue to belch in my mouth!" The interlocutor responds to this vile remark: "To belch seems to be a very gentle thing, now and always." (*Suavis ructus mihi est, sic et sine modo*). At the nocturnal feasts, the guests, laden with food and drink, sent their belches from one to another, and a slave was on hand expressly for the purpose of noting the omens. Each *ructator* knew, at a given point, whether the Fates were favorable to him, and if he were to have any contrary luck in his affairs of love: "There is there, incessantly, a complacent one ready to cry marvel," says Juvenal, if the amphitryon has belched well (*si bene ructavit*), if he has urinated in a straight manner (*sic rectum minxit*), and if the gold basin has resounded in receiving his offering." There were, also, many other omens, generally prohibitory, accompanying the emission of a *flatus*, the nature of which was revealed by the sound or by the odor; not only was there plenty of reciprocal indulgence for these accidents, to the sound and odor of which all were accustomed, but there was, even, mutual applause for having placed no obstacle against the desires of nature and of that omnipotent god who was called *Gaster*. Each time that a *crepitus* was heard, the assistants would turn toward the south or the east, the father of winds, puff out their cheeks and pretend to be whistling, drawing up their lips like a zephyr. It was only in the serious or religious assemblages that silence had to be imposed on one's rear and the gates of this indecent Aeolus had to be kept closed. But everywhere else, and especially at table, entire liberty and absolute indulgence. "When we are in the dining room, in the midst of slaves and servants," says Cato, "if anyone among us has burst forth under his tunic, he does me no wrong; if it happens that a slave or a servant permits himself to do during his sleep what one does not do in company, he does me no wrong." The little god Poop figured in all the

comissions under the figure of a crouching infant, who is pressing his sides and appears to be in the exercise of his divine function. This god had been conceived by the Egyptians, who, it would seem, had need of frequently invoking him. "The Egyptians," says Clement of Alexandria, "look upon the noises of the belly as divinities" (*Aegyptos crepitus ventri pro numinibus habent*); but according to one commentator, reference here was, rather, to the murmurs of the intestines, called *borborgyms* in technical language. St. Jerome is more explicit when he says that he will not speak of the poop which is a cult among the Egyptians (*taceam de crepitu ventris inflati, quae pelusiciaca religio est*). Saint Cesaire, in his *Dialogues*, even adds that this cult inspired a sort of fanaticism among the pagans who practiced it: *Nisi forte de ethnicis Aegyptiis loquamur, qui flatu ventris non sine furore quodam inter deos retulerunt*. Finally, Minutius Felix certainly does not intend a jest when he makes the statement that the Egyptians are less afraid of Serapis than they are of the noises which come from the shameful parts of the body (*crepitus per pudenda corporis emissos*). Wholly Egyptian as he was, the god Poop had been naturalized among the Romans, who gave him an honored place on the altars of their lares. They had even decreed in his honor a chapel beyond the walls, near the source of the Egeria; but they adored him in public under the name of the god *Ridiculus* and under the form of a little monster, represented in the posture which was best suited to his deeds and gestures. The omen resided in the sound of the poop (*peditum*, as Catullus calls it) rather than in its odor; for augury was attached by preference to sounds. It appeared, however, that women did not permit themselves this sort of liberty, and that they refused thus to furnish omens; for Apuleius speaks of a fig from which the women abstain for the reason that it caused flatulence (*quia pedita excitat*). The women avoided, then, with precaution, listening to the spirits of their bellies, which sometimes broke down all barriers in the convulsions of pleasure, the omen becoming then more significant. When, by chance, the

spirits had announced their pregnancy, the sound promised a male child, the odor a daughter. Such is, probably, the origin of that indecent epithet which was applied to girls in the popular language, in which they were known as *fizzles*. Moreover, the fizzle (*visium*) was never taken in as good part as the poop (*crepitus*) among the Romans. "The word *divisio* is respectable," says Cicero, "but it becomes obscene when one replies: *intercapedo*."<sup>\*</sup> These omens, the candid faith of which did not excuse their impropriety, came from the Greeks by direct line; for Aristophanes shows us, in his *Knights*, a character who draws from a dream such an incongruous and immodest omen, and who thanks the gods for such a happy one.

There were still other human noises which lent themselves to the capricious interpretations of auguries: the sneeze, for example, was understood in many manners, according to whether it was resounding, plaintive, startling, farcical, simple or reiterative. To sneeze in the morning, to sneeze in the evening and to sneeze at night held three different meanings: Bad, good, excellent. It was still more significant if the sneeze came suddenly in the midst of the labors of Venus. The goddess proclaimed, thereby, her beneficent protection for the sneezer who was thoughtful enough to turn to the right as he sneezed. The sneeze at a meal brought joy to the guests, who at once saluted and applauded the one whom the god had visited;<sup>†</sup> for, in accordance with an ancient belief, which reappears incessantly in the Greek writers, the sneeze was attributed to the invisible passings of a tutelary god; they had nicknamed him the bird of Jupiter, the preserver; Socrates said he was a demon, and the philosopher prided himself on understanding the sternutatory language of this familiar demon. The sneeze was not so good in women as in men; and the former feared it, moreover, to the point of having re-

<sup>\*</sup>*Intercapedo*: literally, an interruption. "In the nominative singular," remarks Andrews (*Latin-English Lexicon*), "the word is said to have an obscene signification." In addition to the passage from Cicero, Andrews cites Quintilian, 8, 3, 46.

<sup>†</sup>Cf. our "God bless you!"

course, when they were subject to it, to certain preventive means. To sneeze three times in succession, or any odd number of times, was the best of omens. "May the gods grant that I sneeze seven times," said Opimius, "before entering the couch of my goddess!" The sneeze was always to be explained by supernatural causes; there was a desire to see, in this violent shaking up of the animal spirits, the exit of some genius which had been working in the brain of the sneezer. Mythology recounts that Pallas, born from Jupiter's forehead, had at first wished to be born by the favor of a sneeze, which failed to bring a new chaos into the nascent universe. Mythology, always ingenious in its allegoric fables, supposed that Venus refrained from sneezing in order not to make wrinkles in her face. Jupiter and Cybele were, then, the deities who presided over sneezes, which were looked upon as favorable when they had been vented to the right with as much noise as possible. These sneezes were not an indifferent matter in love, and to them were attributed a horde of happy prognostics. When Catullus shows us Acme and Septimius in the arms of one another, swearing an eternal love: "Let us serve but one god," cries Acme deliriously, "if it is true that the fire which flows in my veins is more ardent than your own!" And the poet adds, "Love, which up to that time had sneezed to the left, showed his approbation by sneezing to the right (*amor, sinistram ut ante, dextram sternuit approbationem*). Propertius could not better depict the benefits of such a sneeze than by supposing that Love, on the day of Cynthia's birth, had sneezed in this manner over the cradle of the beautiful one:

*Num tibi nascenti et primis, mea vita, diebus,  
Candidus argutnum sternuit omen Amor.*

One in love was also very much preoccupied with the ringing of the ears, sudden jerks of the body (*sallisationes*) and incoherent movements of a member. These omens, at least for the most part, were not fortunate; they were looked upon as indications

of infidelity or of some other offense which was an outrage to love. Pliny was not so credulous as his contemporaries; he affirmed, however, that the ringing of the ears was the echo of conversation which the absent were holding.\* The jealous, especially, had faith in these presentiments; and a lover whose ears rang did not doubt that the virtue of his mistress was in peril. It was also, sometimes, a symptom of love, which spoke and answered itself, as in these verses, attributed to Catullus:

*Garrula quid totis resonans mihi noctibus auris  
Nescio quem dicis nunc meminisse mei?*

One sought, always, a supernatural effect for a purely physical cause. A ringing of the ears was enough to trouble the tête-à-tête of lovers, to prevent their meeting and to make coldness succeed the liveliest passion. The ringing of the ears invited defiance and was a forerunner of misfortunes, tears, a break or a treason. There were, in the same manner, nervous vibrations which made themselves felt in the members: those of the hand, of the foot, of the organs of generation and of all the body had each a particular omen more or less unfavorable. After a trembling of this sort, the one who had experienced it remained frozen and impotent in the presence of the most beautiful Greek courtesan, in the presence of the most provoking cinaedus. Physiological phenomena were always most oppressing when they effected the left side of the body; thus, one might explain, in good part, all that took place on the right side. There were, also, many strange omens which accompanied the inspection of the shameful parts and which were consulted, ordinarily, upon leaving the bath; but these omens are not to be translated into French; we are forced to leave them under the veil of the Latin: *Mentula torta, bonum omen; infaustam, si pendula, etc.*

Beyond the sounds of the human body, interest was manifested in all exterior noises, in a propitious sense, or otherwise; these

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\*Cf. our burning of the ears.

noises were of various natures according to the persons concerned. Thus, the one to which the friends and agents of sensual pleasure attached the most importance was, of necessity, the creaking of the bed (*argutatio lecti*). In the various murmurs of this piece of furniture were heard cries, complaints or groans, like a soul in pain; there was, here, a mysterious language, full of omens and amorous oracles. Catullus cannot paint the transports of a courtezan in delirium (*febriculosi scorti*), without painting the moving voice of the bed, which trembles and moves (*tremulique quassa lecti argutatio inambulatioque*). This voice resembled, sometimes, the sound of splitting wood, sometimes the grating of iron against iron, sometimes a prayer, sometimes a menace, sometimes a sigh, sometimes a lamentation. Each sound had a particular sense, fortunate or unfortunate, and very often the tenderest caresses were troubled or interrupted by warnings of the cubicular genius. A bed which preserved an absolute silence, and which remained silent under the most active solicitations, appeared to contain a reservation for the future and a suspicion for love. The place which the bed occupied, too, was not indifferent. It was called *lectus adversus* when it was placed against the door of the room, in order to close that door against evil divinities. It was called *lectus genialis* when it was consecrated to the *Genius* who was the father of Pleasure. This Genius it was who gave a soul and a voice to the ivory, the ebony, the cedar or the silver which composed the throne of pleasure. Juvenal pictures for us an obliging wretch who had consented to supply the absent virility of a husband by rendering him a father: "During one whole night, he says to him, I have reconciled you with your wife while you were weeping at the door. I take as my witness the bed where the reconciliation was made, and your own ears which heard the creaking of that bed, and the broken accents of the lady." (*Testis mihi lectulus et tu, ad quam lecti sonus et dominae vox. . . .*) If the bed spoke to lovers, in good or evil part, so did everything which surrounded them in the long hours employed under the auspices of Venus; everything took on a per-

susative and imperious voice. The sputtering of the lamp was an especially favorable augury, and the lovers had nothing to fear when the flame, flaring up, suddenly shot out a brighter light. Ovid, in his *Heroides*, says that the light sneezes (*sternuit et lumen*), and that this sneezing promises all the happiness which might be wished in love.

The courtezans were the most clever in explaining these omens, which must have been their especial province; all the time not given to love they passed in interrogating the Fates and auguries; love was, moreover, the unique object of their worries and their aspirations. If the ordinary course of events did not furnish them with natural auspices which they might interpret, they had various means of foreseeing events and of forcing destiny to betray its secrets, by means of certain noises which they provoked. They would crackle the leaves of a tree with their half-closed fists; they would listen to the sound of laurel leaves on burning coals; they would toss up to the ceiling of their cell kernels of the apple or the pear, the stones of cherries or grains of wheat and seek to touch the mark they had aimed at; sometimes they would scatter on their left hand rose petals which they had fashioned with the other hand in the form of a bubble; at other times they would count the leaves of a stem of poppy or the rays of the carolla of a marguerite; finally, they would throw four dice, which must, in falling, offer them the aid of Venus, if all four presented different numbers. The poets of love are full of these divinations, which make the hearts of lovers beat. These latter, while mindful of the omens which concern themselves, were equally sensitive to those which concerned everybody. A meretrix who stumbled over the jam of the door, or who made a false step over the threshold as she left on her way to the lupanar or the promenade, took care to return into the house and did not come out the rest of the day, refraining that day from the tasks of her trade. If upon arising in the morning, she stumbled against the wood of her bedstead, she would go back to bed. The *amasii* and the women devoted to prostitution were more suscep-

tible than any others to omens which presented themselves along their path, to the flight or the cry of birds, to murmurs of the air, to the form of clouds, to the first person they met, to the last object on which their glance had rested. But, moreover, they were attached to certain omens which had no value except for them alone. A wood pigeon, a dove, a sparrow, a goose, a partridge, those birds dear to Venus and to Priapus, did not appear without reason in the way of one who was only dreaming of love, and who believed that by means of them she could interpret everything successfully. The emperor Proculus, after having conquered the Sarmatians, beheld, one day, on the facade of the temple of Juno, two sparrows which were diverting themselves. He had the patience to count their cries and their wing beats; then he ordered that one hundred Sarmatian girls who had never known a man be brought to him; at the end of three days he had them all pregnant as the result of his labors. When a culpable zealot of masculine debauchery heard a goose cry, he felt himself filled with ardor and strength; if a woman in love (*amasia*) saw a turtle as she walked in the fields, she made a vow to yield to the first man who should demand that she adore Venus with him. It was only necessary to meet a dog face to face in order to be assured that all would go well with your libidinous desires. But if, on the contrary, you met a cat, it was wise to put off till tomorrow the amorous recreation which you had proposed, and which could only turn out to your confusion.

There were, also, some very singular superstitions which worked exclusively on the credulity of the followers of Venus. These followers, a fantastic and bizarre lot, did not observe the fasts and abstinences of pleasure which matrons imposed upon themselves in honor of a number of religious solemnities, but they did not spare themselves privations of the same sort in order to satisfy certain scruples of conscience, which matrons were not supposed to have. A courtezan who had had the weakness to co-habit with a circumcised man (*recutitus*) was condemned thereafter to rest for a whole week. A debauchee, who desired to ob-

tain from a lad or a lass the favor of one or the other Venus, had but to formulate his request under the form of a vow addressed to the goddess, and he had the more chances of being heard. “O my sovereign, O Venus!” cries a character in the romance of Athenaeus, while sharing the bed of a handsome adolescent, “if I obtain from this child what I desire, and that without his knowing it, tomorrow I will make you a present of a pair of turtle-doves.” The adolescent pretended to snore, and the next day he had a pair of turtle-doves. It was not merely in the case of marriage that the question of virginity appeared to be a difficult one to determine. Libertines sought at great expense the first flower of virgins, and this provided a lucrative commerce for the lenons, male and female, who sometimes took their victims at the age of seven or eight years in order to be more certain of the condition of an article of merchandise which was so fragile and so rare. The purchaser frequently demanded proofs, which it would have been very difficult to furnish him, if superstition had not lent credence to a strange custom, which was even employed in marriages to authenticate the virgin state. This was how the thing took place: at the moment when the girl, who was giving herself as being *intacta*, was about to enter the bed where she would cease to be so, her neck was measured with a thread, which was preserved as something precious until the next day; then, they would measure it again with the same thread: if the neck had remained of the same thickness, and if the thread exactly fitted, it was concluded that the loss of virginity in this maiden dated back to an epoch sufficiently ancient and was not to be credited to the one who believed he had taken it; but, on the contrary, this virginity became incontestable for the most incredulous in those cases in which the neck had enlarged following the defloration, and in which the thread was, consequently, too short to surround it completely. It is to this method, as simple as it is naïve, that Catullus makes allusion in his epithalamium of Thetis and Peleus, by saying: “Tomorrow, her nurse, at daybreak, will no

longer be able to surround the neck of the bride with the thread of the night before."

*Non illam nutrix orienti luce revisens,  
Hesterno collum poterit circumdare collo.*

This thread or lace which had established a virginity, thanks frequently to the complacence of the person charged with measuring the neck of the virgin who had become a woman, was suspended in the temple of Fortuna Virginalis, built by Servius Tullius near the Porta Capena; with this happy thread one dedicated to the goddess, also known as *Virginensis Dea*, the other evidences of virginity, written in characters of blood on the linen of the victim: "You offer to Fortuna Virginalis the soiled vestments of young girls!" cries Arnobius, with an indignation which St. Augustine shares in his *City of God*. This Fortuna Virginalis was no other than Venus, to whom were also offered nuts, in order to recall the fact that, during the first wedding night, the conjugal mystery was accomplished to the sound of *nuts* which the children scattered with a great noise over the threshold of the bridal chamber in order to stifle the cries of expiring virginity. "Slave, give, oh, give nuts to children!" (*Concubine, nuces da*), says Catullus in the nuptial song of Julia and Manlius. "Husband, do not spare the nuts!" says Virgil in his bucolics: *Sparge, matri, nuces!* In the eyes of the Romans, to whom everything was an allegory, the nut represented the enigma of marriage—the nut, the shell of which must first be broken before one knows what it contains.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

THE courtezans, especially the Greek courtezans, who were the delight of the voluptuaries of Rome, had no historian or panegyrist as had those whom Greece had recognized in a political, philosophical and literary way, by decreeing them a sort of cult of enthusiasm and admiration. The Romans, we have already said, were more gross, more material, and also more sensual than the Greeks of the century of Pericles and Aspasia. What they demanded of their women of pleasure, of those foreign women whose language they hardly understood, was not a brilliant, substantial, profound and witty conversation, an echo of the lessons of the Academy of Athens, a reminiscence of the golden age of *hetairai*; no, they sought, they appreciated nothing but pleasures less ideal, and they included solely among the auxiliaries of physical love good cheer, perfumes, song, music, pantomime and the dance. They did not accord, moreover, beyond the *triclinium* and the *cubile* (the dining-room and bed-chamber), any influence to the customary companions of their orgies and their debaucheries. The life of courtezans was, then, never public, and whatever intimacy it possessed was revealed in the society of young libertines. This society, undoubtedly, wholly occupied as it was with its own pleasures, included poets and writers who might have been able to devote their prose or their verse to the biography of those courtezans with whom they lived in such good faith. But this lubricious subject impressed them as being unworthy to hand down to posterity. And if each of them consented to sing the mistress whom he himself had taken, rehabilitating her, so to speak, through the advocacy of love, none of them, at least among the self-respecting authors, would have dared to turn poet to the courtezans of Rome; just as the painters, who did not refuse to do the portrait of their own pre-

tiosae and famosae, would have blushed to take the title, as did certain artists of Greece, of *painters of courtezans*. If a few words, especially devoted to the history and customs of celebrated courtezans among the Romans, were composed under the dictation of these sirens and with the object of immortalizing them, we may still suppose with much reason that such works did not emanate from distinguished pens, and that they must have been destroyed along with the *molles libri*, and all the obscene writings which paganism did not endeavor to protect against the just anathema of evangelic morality.

But, on the other hand, the poets, who were then, as in all times, the table companions and lovers of courtezans, showed themselves anxious to accord them in particular the homages which they would have been ashamed to give them in general; their love, in their eyes, elevated the one who was the object of it; the latter was, from then on, no longer a lost woman, branded with infamy by the law and stigmatized with the name of meretrix. She was a loved woman, and, as such, worthy of regard and delicate attentions. On her side, the courtezan, in perceiving herself loved, would sometimes forget her profession and really feel the love which she had inspired, of which she was proud and which gave her the only honorable reputation to which she was permitted to aspire: "Thus," says M. Walkenaer, in his *History of Horace*, which we do not permit ourselves to cite with as much confidence as we do the original authorities, "thus, despite the precepts given to young girls destined for the profession of courtezan by those who had reared them for this profession, they were, none the less, susceptible to a true love." It is, then, in the collection of the classic poets, it is in the poems addressed by them to these courtezans, that we must seek the elements for a history of these coryphees of Roman Prostitution. Horace, Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius and Martial furnish us with the only documents which may serve in drawing up an inventory, very summary and very incomplete, of the courtezans who were in vogue from the elevation of Augustus to the imperial throne to

the reign of Trajan (41 B.C.-100 A.D.). These courtesans, whom we shall call the Muses of the erotic poets, belonged, for the most part, to the class of famosae, and were those whose minds, beauty and cleverness had given them the rights of the city; but as they grew old, most of them fell back into the obscure throng of meretrices of low degree, and some of them, after having seen consuls, praetors and the generals of armies seated at their table and disputing their favors, which were paid for at fabulous prices, after having been surrounded with clients, slaves, lenons and poets, after having inhabited the palace and spent, in feasts and prodigalities of all sorts, the gold of several conquered provinces, they had fallen by degrees into such an abandonment, such misery, that one might find them of an evening covered with an old *centon* or variegated mantle, wandering among the she-wolves of the Summoenium and offering to the unknown passer-by the infamous services of their hands or their mouths. These shameful examples of the decadence of courtesans did not even excite the pity of their ancient adulators, and the latter, who had loved them most, would turn away from them with horror, as we learn from Catullus, who met in this manner, in the opprobrium of Prostitution, one of the mistresses whom he had hymned amid the splendors of the gallant life.

We shall, first of all, pass in review the loves of Horace, in order to make the acquaintance of the great courtesans of his time; for Horace, sage and prudent always, even in the affairs of pleasure, cared only for the facile loves, in which his peace of mind might not be compromised. The terrible Julian law against adulteresses no longer existed; but Roman jurisprudence, although fallen into desuetude on this delicate point, left arms none the less terrible in the hands of a deceived husband, a father or a brother outraged by the dissolute conduct of a daughter or a sister. Horace knew that one could not become, with impunity, the lover of a matron, and that a lover taken in adultery ran the risk of being punished in the very theatre of his crime, either by the husband, who might be content with cutting off the nose and

ears of the guilty party, or by losing his character of a man and being deprived of the attributes of virility, or finally, by being disemboweled in the presence of his fair accomplice. Horace, in the second satire of his first book, à propos of Cupiennius, who was very eager for the love of matrons (*mirator cunni Cupiennius albi*), enumerates the victims whom this love had claimed, and whose pleasures had been sadly interrupted (*multo corrupta dolore voluptas*): “The one threw himself from a roof, another is dead under the lashes, this one, in fleeing, fell among a band of robbers; this one purchased his skin with his crowns; this other has been soiled with the urine of vile slaves; what is more, the iron has cut off the vital parts of one of his rakish companions (*quia etiam illud accidit ut cuidam testes caudamque salacem demeteret ferrum*).” Horace repeats, then, the vow which Sallust often made: “As for me, I never touch a matron (*matronam nullam ego tango*)”; but he did not imitate the follies of Sallust, who ruined himself over freed women; he did not imitate Marsaeus, who dissipated his patrimony and sold even his house in order to entertain a *danseuse* named Origo: “I have never had an affair with the wives of other men,” remarked Marsaeus to Horace. . . . “No,” replied the poet, “but you have had affairs with mountebanks and with prostitutes (*meretricibus*), who ruin the reputation even more than the purse.”

And yet, Horace did not disdain, on his own account, the courtesans and dancers; but he kept, with them, a watch over his purse and his health. He preserved the use of his reason in all the disorders of his senses, and he was always sufficiently master of himself not to put himself at the mercy of a woman, even though he were passionately taken with her. In his liveliest passions, a disciple as he was of the Epicurean philosophy, he followed, first of all, the inspirations of sensual pleasure, and he carefully avoided all that might result in embarrassment, annoyance or ennui. That is why, without speaking of the shameful debauches which Roman manners authorized in an order of pleasure contrary to nature, he did not concentrate his affection on a single

object, but shared it ordinarily among a number of women friends, who were, successively or simultaneously, his mistresses. That is why, on examining the question with a cold impartiality, he preferred, to the dangerous promiscuity of matronly gallantries, the tranquil possession of mercenary mistresses: "In order not to repent," he says to an idolator of great ladies, "cease to pursue the matrons, for there is in this labor more evil to gain than profit to receive. A matron, if you will permit me, Cerinthus, despite her cameos and her emeralds, has otherwise a thigh no more polished nor a leg better shaped; sometimes even, you find a better one on a courtezan (*atque etiam melius persaepe togatae est*). Add, also, that the merchandise of this latter is not overlaid with rouge; whatever she has to sell, she sells openly; what beauty she has, she does not pride herself on, but shows it; she will tell you in advance what defects she has; it is a custom of coachmen who buy horses to submit them to a general inspection. . . . With a matron, except her face, you can see nothing; the rest, if it is not at the house of Catia,\* is hidden until the robe has been removed. If you would see this forbidden fruit, which is surrounded with so many intrenchments (and it is this which renders you so foolish), a thousand obstacles then arise in your path: guardians, a litter, coiffeurs, parasites and that stole which falls to the ankles and that cloak which envelops her; these are all barriers which do not permit you to approach your end."

Horace, in this satire, in which he reveals himself, along with his tastes and habits, goes on to compare this matron, who is so well-guarded, with a courtezan, who surrenders herself before one makes the attack: "With her," he says, "nothing is an obstacle; her gauze permits you to see her as well as though she were nude; you can almost measure with the eye the most secret parts; you can see then that her leg is not ill-shaped or her foot ignoble. Should you prefer to have a trap set for you and the price of the merchandise demanded before you had seen it?" Moreover, Horace avows that he has no patience when the flame

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\*A matron known for her loose manners. See text following.

of desire circulates in his veins (*tument tibi quum inguina*) and that he then addresses himself to the first servant maid, to the first infant, who comes along: "I love," he says frankly, "easy and convenient amours (*namque parabilem amo Venerem facilemque*). She who says to us: 'After a while . . . give me more time . . . wait till my husband has left . . .' I leave such a one to the priests of Cybele, as Philo says. He takes the one who does not hold herself at so high a price and who makes no point of waiting when one orders her to come. Let her be beautiful, well-built and well-groomed, but not to the point of desiring to appear whiter or better-built than nature has made her. This one, when my right flank presses her left flank, is my Ilia and my Egeria; I give her the name that pleases me. And I do not fear, while I am making love (*dum futuo*), that the husband will come back from the country, that the door will be broken down, that the dog will bark, that the house will fall about my ears, that the lady will turn pale, leap out of bed and lament her unhappiness, that she will be afraid for her members or for her dot, or that I myself shall have to tremble on my own account; for in such a case, there is nothing to do but flee, with bare feet and garments in disorder, or else, woe to your crowns, to your buttocks and to your reputation! . . . Poor wretch, he who is taken! I side with Fabius." Horace, in his amiable Epicureanism, knew pleasure rather than love.

His first mistress, the one at least whom he first celebrated in his poems, was named Neaera. He loved her, or rather, he kept her for more than a year, during the consulate of Plancus, in the year of Rome 714. He was at this time twenty-five years old, and he had not as yet made a name for himself among the poets; he was then too poor to pay dearly for the favors of this *chanteuse*, who undoubtedly did not possess at this time the vogue which she was later to attain at the comessations. One night, she enlaced her young lover in her arms and pronounced this vow, to which the moon was a mute witness: "So long as the wolf pursues the lamb; so long as Orion, the terror of sailors, shall lift up the

angry sea and the tempests; so long as the zephyrs shall caress the long locks of Apollo, I will render you love for love!" But the vow was soon forgotten, and Neaera squandered her nights with a richer lover, who could better afford to pay for them. She did not wish, however, to quarrel with Horace, who broke off all relations with her, saying: "Yes, if there is something of a man in Flaccus (*si quid in Flacco viri est*), then I shall seek a love which responds to my own!" He detached himself then from the faithless Neaera and predicted to his rival that he himself would be abandoned in turn, even though he possessed numerous flocks and vast domains, even though he was handsomer than Nireus, and even though he could cause the Pactolus to flow through his mistress' house. The latter distinguished herself afterwards in the trade of *chanteuse*, and when Horace, thanks to his poetry, had won the friendship of Mecaenas and the favors of Augustus, he remembered Neaera and often sent for her to sing at the feasts which he gave to his friends: "Go, young slave," he says, in an Ode on the return of the emperor after a war in Spain, "bring us perfume, crowns and an amphora contemporary with the war of the Marsi, if it has escaped the bands of Sparticus. Say to the songstress, Neaera, that she should hasten to knot her braids, perfumed with myrrh; if her cursed porter delays in opening the gate, come back without her. Age, which whitens my head, has extinguished my ardors, which now are a little afraid of quarrels and strife; I should have been less patient in my warm youth, under the consulate of Plancus!" He had loved Neaera more than he loved his other mistresses; for he desired to avenge himself on her by showing her what she had lost through her infidelity.

"At the epoch in which Horace entered the world," says M. Walkenaer, in his *History* of his favorite poet, "there were at Rome three courtezans renowned among all those of their profession; they were Origo, Lycoris, and Arbuscula." Unfortunately, the ancient scholiasts do not enlighten us much with regard to these famosae, whom they are content to name, and Horace, who

does not appear to have had particular relations with them, merely tells us that the first had reduced to poverty the opulent Marsaeus. He affects also to join with the name of this avid and prodigal courtezan that of a patrician woman, named Catia, known for her debaucheries and for the fondness she had for indecently raising her robe when she was promenading in the Via Sacra. This Catia, who did not blush at rivaling the courtezans in public, was one day surprised in adultery in the temple of Venus Theatina near the theatre of Pompey, and the populace pursued her with stones. Her adultery, according to the scholiast, Porphyrius, was out of the ordinary; for she had been found giving herself at the same time to Valerius, a tribune of the people, and to a Sicilian rustic (*Valerio ac siculo colono*); other scholiasts, however, give her but a single accomplice in this flagrant act. The misadventure of Catia served once more to confirm the ideas of Horace as to the preference which was to be shown to the love of courtezans. He was faithless but once to his principle, when he permitted himself to be seduced by a debauched old woman who belonged to an illustrious family and who charmed him by her false airs of philosophy and learning. He would voluntarily have limited his liaison with this female stoic to relations purely literary, but he could not submit for long to the amorous exigencies which he felt he did not have the courage to satisfy. He was, too, attached to a beautiful courtezan named Inachia, and he would have been ashamed to offer her an unworthy rival. This latter was irritated at seeing herself at first neglected, soon shoved to one side, then detested and repulsed; she undoubtedly endeavored to take revenge on Horace through Inachia; but Horace made cause with his mistress, to whom he sacrificed, without regret and without pity, the odious libertine who had held him like a bird of prey. Two horrible epigrams which he had coined against her ran about Rome and caused all the world to point a finger at her: "You demand of me, secular ruin," he says in the first of these two pieces, "you demand to know what it is has enfeebled my vigor, you whose teeth are

black, whose forehead is labored with wrinkles, and whose hideous anus yawns between two fleshless buttocks like that of a cow with the diarrhoea? Undoubtedly that bosom of yours, that putrid throat and breasts like those of a mare, undoubtedly that flaccid belly and those pock-marked thighs, set upon hydropic legs, ought to excite my desires! . . . But it will have to suffice you to be opulent and to have the triumphal images of your ancestors borne in funeral processions; for there is not a woman who struts laden with heavier pearls than yours. . . . What! because the books of philosophy are scattered over the silken cushions, you think it is that which prevents my nerves from growing taut—my nerves, which care little enough for letters—and which makes my love languish (*fascinum*)? Ah, you tried hard enough to provoke me to satisfy you (*ut superbo provokes ab inguine*); but your mouth had to come to your assistance (*ore ad laborandum est tibi*).” In his second Ode, Horace draws an even more hideous picture of this immodest creature: “What do you seek, O woman worthy of being coupled with black elephants? Why do you send presents and letters to me, who am not a vigorous lad, but whose sense of smell is not blunted? . . . For, when it comes to sniffing a polyp or the unclean goat which hides under your armpits, I have a finer nose than the hunt-dog which scents the lair of the wild boar. What perspiration and what infectious miasmas exhale from all her withered members, when she forces herself to assuage an insatiable fury which betrays her exhausted lover (*pene soluto*), as she, her disgusting face smeared with humid chalk and rouge, prepared from the excrements of the crocodile, breaks her couch and tears down her bed curtains in her lubricious transports!” It required nothing less than this for Horace to deliver himself from the jealous pursuit of the lady of the elephants (*mulier nigris dignissima barris*).

Unfortunately, we know no more than the name of that Inachia, whom Horace proclaimed three times in a night as the goddess of pleasure (*Inachiam ter nocte potes!* enviously cried the unworthy rival of Inachia); but almost at the same time, Horace

was intrigued with another courtezan, who yielded nothing in point of beauty to Inachia, and who, in addition, gave herself gratis to her poet. Horace called her, probably for this reason, the *good* Cinara. He was not able to keep her long, and soon Cinara was in quest of a more prodigal lover. She had little difficulty in finding one, and Horace, who was inconsolable, could forget her only by drowning herself in the fumes of Bacchus. This disinterested courtezan had the misfortune to become a mother. The poet, Propertius, who was by her side during the pains of childbirth, counseled her to make a vow to Juno, and at once, under the auspices of that compassionate goddess, Cinara was delivered. This vow made to Juno appears to have determined the opinion of scholiasts, who would have it that Cinara died in childbirth. Horace regretted her all his life, amid all the loves which succeeded this one, which he incessantly recalled. Cinara, the good Cinara, fastened herself, in the memories of Horace's youth, to his dearest illusions; Cinara had loved him for himself, without interest and without recompense: "I am no longer what I was under the reign of the good Cinara!" he remarked tristfully, in approaching his fiftieth year. Gratidia, who replaced Cinara, was not calculated to condemn the latter to forgetfulness: Gratidia had been beautiful and a courtezan like the other; but the years, by dispersing the throng of her adorers, had led her to unite with her trade of courtezan an industry that was surer and less variable. Gratidia was a perfumer and a saga, or a magician: she sold philtres, she made them also, and the commentators of Horace have assumed that she tried out the power of these aphrodisiacs on her lover, whom she thought thus to attach to her in a more invincible manner. But Horace, on the contrary, was not slow in shaking off the yoke which the conjurations and the beverages of the magician had not succeeded in rendering light and agreeable to him. The poet had a horror of those shady works, in which his relations with a saga made him an accomplice; he feared also for his health, which too energetic stimulants might compromise, and so he separated violently from

Gratidia. The latter employed her magic art to hold him and to bring him back; all was in vain, and Horace, advised of the libidinous relations which Gratidia secretly had entered into with an old debauchee named Varus, made use of this pretext for an open break. Gratidia then complained loudly, accusing him of ingratitude and threatening him with terrible reprisals. Horace knew all that she was capable of, and so did not wait for a vengeance which might strike him through poison rather than through evil spells. He denounced to public opinion, in his verses, the criminal practices of the art of the *sagae*, dishonoring Gratidia under the transparent name of Canidia. We have cited elsewhere the sinister revelations which Horace makes on the subject of the mysteries of the Esquiline hill. Gratidia was, perhaps, forced to explain and justify herself before the magistrates; she obtained from Horace, we do not know through what influence or at what price, a sort of poetic retraction, shot through, however, with a bitter and insulting irony: “I recognize, with humility, the power of your art,” he said in this new ode, destined to paralyze the terrible effect of the other two, “in the name of the kingdom of Proserpine and of the implacable Diana, I conjure you on my knees, spare me, spare me! Too long have I undergone the effects of your vengeance, O lover dear to sailors and foreign merchants! See, my youth has fled! . . . Your magic perfumes have whitened my hair. . . . Overcome by my sufferings, I believe what I denied for long. . . . Yes, your enchantments have reached my heart. . . . My lyre, which you accuse of imposture, would you have it resound for you? Ah well! you shall be modesty, you shall be probity itself! No, there is nothing abject in your birth. . . . No, you do not go by night, wise magician, to disperse, nine days after death, the ashes of the miserable. . . . Your soul is generous and your hands are pure!” To this forced disavowal Canidia responds with imprecations: “What! You would, with impunity, like a new pontiff, launch thunderbolts on the rights of the Esquiline hill and fill Rome with my name! You might, without incurring my wrath, divulge

the secret rites of Cotytto and make mockery of the mysteries of the free god of Love!" This passage evidently proves that Gratidia, like the majority of the sageæ, lent herself to incredible debaucheries and did not remain a stranger to certain nocturnal orgies, which permitted a strange promiscuity of the sexes, as though to renew the impure cult of Cotytto, the Venus of Thrace, the ancient hermaphroditic goddess of Syria. "Death will come too slow for your liking!" cried the infernal Canidia, "you shall draw out a miserable and hateful life, serving as the pasture to sufferings that are always new. . . . Sometimes, in an access of somber despair, you will want to hurl yourself from a tower or plunge a dagger into your heart; sometimes, but in vain, you will surround your neck with a deadly cord, but I, triumphant, shall launch myself from the earth, and you shall feel me bounding upon your shoulders!"

Horace had need to get his breath after such an amour as this, born amid erotic potions and under the sway of magic invocations; he never pardoned Canidia, for he let fly thereafter more than one poisoned dart against her, and he might rejoice at having made of the nickname which he had given her a pseudonym for a female poisoner: "Canidia, has she then prepared her horrible viands?" he said a long time afterward, in criticising the garlic. Horace was exceedingly sensitive to bad odors, which reacted on his nervous system; he had, thus, an aversion for a very beautiful courtezan named Hagna, whose odor he did not fancy, but who was not less idolized by her lover Balbinus. We shall pass in silence the numerous distractions which Horace sought in the domains of the masculine Venus, and we shall put to the account of Roman depravation, the continual infidelities which he committed toward his Bathyllus, as he crowned himself with flowers and drank his Cecubum or his Falernian. Horace was not more moral than his century, and if he loved women prodigiously, he loved boys no less, whom he often even preferred to them: "Beauty, wherever it was to be met with," says the learned M. Walkenaer, "made upon him a lively and ardent impression;

it absorbed his thoughts, troubled his sleep, inflamed his desires; he seized every occasion to satisfy it, without being stopped by scruples and considerations which possessed no force in the manners of his day." In one of his Epodes addressed to Pettius, he recognizes the fact that love will not leave him alone but is constantly inflaming him with a passion for adolescent boys and young girls: "Now it is Lysiscus whom I love," he says with passion, "Lyciscus, who is more beautiful and more voluptuous than a woman. Neither the reproaches of my friends nor the disdain of this youth are sufficient to detach me from him; nothing could do so, unless it were another love for a white young girl or for a beautiful adolescent with long locks." When the poet thus avowed his shameful weakness, winter had three times denuded the forests, he says in the same Ode, since his reason had been freed from the clutches of Inachia. It was at this time, in the course of his thirtieth year, that he became hopelessly enamored of Lyce. She was a foreign courtezan who practiced Prostitution for the profit of her pretended husband, and who had the cleverness to resist at first the pressing solicitations of the poet.

Acron and Porphyriion, who have collected a number of precious details concerning all the persons named in the poems of Horace, have not informed us as to the true name of this Lyce, whom the poet loved above all his mistresses; they merely inform us that she was of Tyrrhenian origin, that is to say, she had been born in Etruria, where the entire population, if we rely upon the evidence of the historian Theopompos, gave itself with fury to the most unbridled debauchery. Plautus gives us to understand that manners had not changed much since his time, when he places these words in the mouth of a character in his *Cistellaria*: "You will not be constrained to amass a dowry, like the women of Tuscany, by trafficking unworthily in your attractions." Lyce then was merely following the principles of her fatherland, when she sold herself to the highest bidder, and when, her riches, shamefully acquired, having permitted her to surround herself with the retinue of a respectable woman, she simulated marriage

in order to augment the price of her favors. Horace was deceived, like everybody else; he believed that he was dealing with a virtuous woman, and, despite his repugnances on the score of adultery, he relaxed his accustomed rigor to come by night and hang up crowns on the door of the astute courtezan, who at first closed eyes and ears against him. He grew hardy by degrees and went to knock on that inexorable door, which opened for others as well as for himself, and which presents alone could render accessible. It was by means of an ode that he recommended himself to the feigned severity of the beautiful Etrurian, who was not in the power of her husband, but had beside her a trusty lenon. This ode, composed in a genre which the Greeks call *paraclausithyron*, was a chant to be executed to music before the closed door of a cruel fair one: "When you were living under the law of a barbarous husband, by the distant springs of Tanaïs," says the amorous poet, "you groaned to see me, Lyce, extended before your door, a prey to the north wind! Hear how this door is beaten by the winds, as the trees of your garden groan and cause the roof of your house to groan! See how the snow which covers the earth is hardened under a pure and glacial sky! Abase that pride of yours, which is hostile to Venus! . . . You will not always see a lover exposed, on the threshold of your dwelling, to the intemperance of the seasons."

Horace certainly did not know that Lyce was a courtezan when, in order to bend her to his desires, he pictured for her her husband in the arms of a Thessalian concubine, named Pieria; when he told her that her father, originally of Tyrrhenia, should not have engendered a Penelope who was a rebel against love; when he had recourse to prayers and tears to supplement the futility of his gifts. But soon, there were no more refusals, so soon as one gave what was asked; he was generous; he was as happy as one could be, and he remained for some time the titulary lover of Lyce, who gave him his conge only to make place for one richer and younger. He did not readily console himself for having been abandoned, and he sought in vain to renew a liaison

which had been broken against the dictates of his own heart. His resentment against Lyce burst forth when the beauty of this courtesan began to show the marks of her libertine life: "The gods, Lyce, have heard my vows!" he cried, with a joy which did not prove that his love was even then extinct: "Yes, Lyce, my vows are accomplished: there you are, an old woman, and you wish still to appear young; with a quavering voice, after you have been drinking, you solicit Cupid, who flees you; he reposes on the fresh cheeks of the beautiful Chias, who knows how to sing so well; he despairs, in his flight, the arid oaks; he flees you, because your yellow teeth, your wrinkles and your white hair frighten him; neither the purple of Cos nor precious stones shall give you back those years which rapid time has buried, as it were, in the history of the past. Where, alas! are your beauty, your freshness, your decent graces? That radiant face, which almost equaled Cinara's own, and which the arts have a hundred times reproduced, what remains of it now? What remains of her in whom all love breathed and who ravished even me? But the destinies gave brief years to Cinara, while they have let you live, like a hundred-year crow, so that ardent youth might see, not without laughing, a torch which has sunk to ashes." There is in this piece the spite and the regret of an abandoned lover. And one cannot regard except as hyperbole a portrait so different from the one which Horace had painted with enthusiasm a few years before. Women and, above all, courtesans, among the Romans, were, it is true, not young for long; the warm climate, the many baths, the cosmetic and the aphrodisiacs, the feasts and excesses of all sorts were not slow in withering the first flower of a spring-time which bordered winter and which took with it the pleasures of love. The old age of women began at thirty years, and if the fires of the erotic passion still burned under the ceruse and the rouge, they were forced to have recourse, in order to appease them, to eunuchs, to spadones, to gladiators, to slaves, or even to the secret and shameful compensations of the *fascinum*.

At the very time that Horace was in possession of the charms

of Lyce, he did not forbid himself the seductions of another enchantress, and he gave the example of incontinence to his new mistress by coming to her, so to speak, through the bed of Pyrrha; he did not love the latter, he was not jealous of her, for one day he surprised her in a grotto, where she had couched under the roses, in the arms of a beautiful adolescent with perfumed hair. He did not disturb the kisses of these lovers, who did not suspect his presence; he contented himself with admiring them, both of them drunken with love and quivering with ardor. He was delighted with this voluptuous spectacle, and he retired noiselessly, before the happy couple could see or hear him. But the following day, he sent an ode of adieu to Pyrrha, to let her know what he had seen and that he had been cured of a love so unhappily shared with another: “Woe to those for whom you shine like a sea which they have not braved! As for me, the votive tablet which I hang up on the walls of the temple of Love shall bear witness that I have laid aside my dripping garments after my shipwreck!” For the victims of shipwreck were in the habit of hanging up, in the temple of Neptune, such a votive tablet, recalling the danger from which they had escaped; Horace alludes to this custom, when he thanks the god of lovers for having saved him from a sea of torments, of jealousy and of infidelity. It is a remarkable fact that the poet, who never prided himself on his own constancy, would not suffer the least perfidy on the part of a mistress; and yet, all his mistresses were courtezans! We may attribute to an excessive vanity, rather than to a delicacy of manners, this intolerance, which contrasted with his epicurean doctrines; the only time, perhaps, that he was not jealous, and when he even lent himself to a partnership, was when his friend, Aristius Fuscus, cast eyes on a freed woman named Lalage, with whom he took a vacation from the pleasures of Rome and of courtezans in his Sabine villa. This Lalage was barely out of infancy, and, not knowing how to resist the pursuits of Fuscus, she made a pretext of her age and refrained on this score from yielding to him; but Horace, sacrificing love to friendship, took up the

interests of his friend by inviting the latter to be patient for a time until he should have triumphed over the refusals of Lalage: "Do not pick the grape while it is still green," he said to him; "wait: the autumn will ripen the black raisin and give it its nuance of purple; soon Lalage will seek you out herself, for the flight of time, despite us and her, brings the years, which will ravage her as they go; soon, with an eye less timid, she will provoke love and make herself dearer than Chloris and that coquette, Pholoë, ever were; she will show her white shoulders and shine like the moon on the bosom of the sea." While waiting, he celebrated, in his voluptuous verses, the infantile charms of Lalage, and he ran through the Sabine forests learning the name of Lalage from all the echoes. He undoubtedly was deceived by this freed woman, as he was at almost the same time by another, Barine, less of a child and quite as charming as Lalage. According to the scholiasts, Barine called herself Julia Varina, for the reason that she was one of the freed women of the Julian family. Horace had also a monomania for making of this courtezan a faithful sweetheart, but he perceived almost at once that her vows were but a means of drawing from him more presents: "Barine," he wrote to her, "I should believe you, if a single one of your perjuries had been followed by a chastisement; if a single one of your teeth had become less white; if a single one of your nails had been deformed; but, perfidious one, barely have you with your deceitful oaths won my faith anew than you appear more beautiful than ever and show with still more pride that youth which I adore! Yes, Barine, you may, with false words, take as witness the waves of the sea, the silent stars of the night, the gods who are inaccessible to the cold of death. Venus shall laugh at your sacrileges; the indulgent nymphs and the cruel Cupid, sharpening incessantly his ardent arrows, shall laugh at them. It is but too true that all the adolescents grow up only to assure you of new slaves. Those whom you retain in your service reproach you with your treasons and yet cannot resolve to leave the hearth of an impious mistress!"

Horace at this time, aged thirty-eight (271 B.C.), yielded to all the furies of his temperament; he was seeking a faithful mistress and he did not find one, from fault of not setting her an example; he often retired to one of his country houses, at Praeneste or Ustica, and he would take with him there to pass the time some beautiful freed woman, who soon would grow tired of this sort of service, and who would quit him to return to Rome. As he was about to depart for Ustica, his Sabine farm, he encountered on the Via Sacra a young woman, wearing the toga and coiffed with a blond peruke; her beauty was so marvelous that everyone looked on her with admiration, but this beauty was still more heightened by that of a companion older than she, though not less attractive. The resemblance of the two courtezans, who differed only in age, was sufficient to prove that one was a daughter of the other. Horace was astonished, and felt himself falling in love on the spot with both at once; but when he learned that the mother was a friend of that perfumer, Gratidia, to whom he had given so sad a celebrity, he resolved to occupy himself only with the daughter, named Tyndaris, a *chanteuse* by trade, kept by a certain Cyrus, a jealous and choleric fellow who beat her. And so, the poet sent this declaration of love to Tyndaris: "The gods protect me, the gods love my incense and my verses. Follow me, and Abundance shall pour from her fecund horn all the treasures of the field. There, in a solitary valley, sheltered from the fires of the dog days, you shall sing, to the lyre of Anacreon, of the faithful Penelope, the deceitful Circe and their troubled love for the same hero. There, in the shade, you shall empty without peril a chalice of Lesbos, and the combats of Bacchus shall not end like those of Mars; you shall no longer have to fear a jealous and angry lover, who, abusing your weakness, dares lay upon you his brutal hands, snatch the flowers from your hair and tear your innocent veil." The songstress, upon receiving this ode, went to consult her mother, who told her of the unworthy conduct of the poet with regard to Gratidia, and who advised her not to expose herself to similar treatment. Tyndaris replied then to

Horace that she could not, without offending her mother, accept the homages of one who had so insulted—nay, accused—Gratidia. Then Horace endeavored by flattery to win over to his side the mother of Tyndaris, to whom he wrote: “O you, the more beautiful daughter of a beautiful mother,\* to you I abandon my guilty iambi; command, and they shall be consumed by the flame or buried in the wave. . . . Appease my irritated soul. I too, in the happy times of my youth, I too have known resentment, and I was led in my delirium to weave bloody iambi. Today, I would have peace after war; as for those insulting verses, I disavow them, but give me back my heart, and become my mistress!” Tyndaris was touched and reconciled Horace with the old Gratidia, bearing herself the cost of the reconciliation.

It was after Tyndaris that Lydia inspired in the fickle poet one of the liveliest passions which he had yet felt. Lydia was greatly taken with a very young man whom she was seducing from the gymnastic exercises and the laborious tasks which were a part of his patrician education; Horace reproached her with thus ruining the future of the young man, whom he succeeded by showing himself more liberal than the other. But scarcely had he taken the place of this beardless Sybarite when Lydia, as capricious as he could ever have been, gave him for rival a certain Telephus, who was smitten with her and who had captivated her senses. Horace was not the man to bear such a rivalry; he put a good face on the matter, however, and endeavored, by persuasion and by tenderness, to struggle against a robust rival who each evening would defeat all the projects the poet had formed in the morning. The most amorous poem was without avail in the face of the deeds and jests of this copious lover: “Ah, Lydia!” he cries in a charming ode, which did not even move this beautiful but inhuman creature, “when you praise in my presence the rose-colored tint, the ivory arms of Telephus, woe to you! My heart is inflamed and swells with wrath. Then my spirit is troubled, I blush. A furtive tear falls on my cheek and

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\*The famous “*O matre pulchra filia pulchrior.*” *Odes*, I., xvi.

betrays the secret fires with which I am slowly being devoured. O grief! When I see your white shoulders shamefully brushed by him in his drunken fury; when I see your lips where his cruel teeth have imprinted their bite! No, if you would only listen to me, you would not trust that barbarous one whose kisses tear that divine mouth where Venus has scattered her sweetest nectar. Happy, three times happy, those who are bound by an indissoluble tie, whom quarrels cannot sunder from one another and whom Death alone, too soon, can separate!" Lydia disdained the prayers and advise of Horace; she did not dismiss the lover who had bitten her and who had bruised her with his blows, but instead, she closed her door to the importunate counsellor. Horace could not remain a single day without a mistress. Although he loved with more than frenzy the faithless one who had driven him away, he desired, by the number of his gallant distractions, to stifle this love which was all the more alive in his heart; and so, he paraded his new mistresses: "When a more worthy love called me," he says in one Ode, "I was held in the dear bounds of Myrtale, the freed woman Myrtale, held in greater transport than the waves of the Adriatic, when they hollow with rage the Calabrian Gulf." But he could not console himself for having lost Lydia. He returned to Rome, and he learned with joy that the brutal Telephus had a successor, and that the beautiful Lydia was being kept by Calais, the son of Ornythus of Thurium; Calais, young and handsome, had nothing to fear from his rival. Horace went to see Lydia, and she was not without emotion at the interview; they fell into each other's arms. The poet chanted his reconciliation in this admirable dialogue: "So long as I was pleasing to you and no lover, more preferred, surrounded with his arms your neck of ivory, I lived happy as the greatest king. . . . So long as you did not burn for another and Lydia did not follow Chloe, Lydia lived prouder and more glorious than the mother of Romulus. . . . Chloe reigns today over me; I love her gentle voice, married to the sound of her lyre; for her, I should not fear death, if the Fates desired to spare her life. . . . I

share the fires of Calais, son of Ornythus of Thurium; for him, I would suffer a thousand deaths, if the Fates would spare his life. . . . But what if that first love should come back? If he should bring once more under his yoke our severed hearts? If I should flee the blonde Chloe and my door should open once more to Lydia? . . . Although he is more beautiful than the day, while you are lighter than the leaf and more irritable than the waves, it is still with you that I should love to live, with you that I should love to die!"

The loves of courtezans were changeful: Lydia soon returned to Calais and Horace to his Chloe, regretting Lydia all the while and afflicted by the thought that he had not been able to retain her. The blonde Chloe was still a child when she sold her flower to the poet, who soon grew negligent of her to devote his attention to two other mistresses, more mature and less unsophisticated, to Phyllis, the freed woman of Xanthias, and to Glycera, the ancient sweetheart of Tibullus. It was under a singular circumstance that the hidden beauties of Phyllis were first revealed to him and that he grew jealous of possessing them. One day, he was on his way to pay a visit to a friend named Xanthias, a young Greek of Phocia, an Epicurean and a voluptuary like himself; he would not permit his presence to be announced to his amiable host, whom he had come to see and who, he was told, was shut up in the library of his house, amid busts and portraits of his ancestors; he had the idea of surprising him, and surprise him he did, but he did not find him with his head over a book: Xanthius had dismissed all his domestics, in order to be alone with the young slave girl whom he had made his concubine. Horace, arrested on the threshold, did not disturb a tête-a-tête the curious details of which he observed well enough, and of which he shared, in a manner, the pleasure. Xanthias perceived that he had a silent witness of his happiness and became conscious of himself and his situation; he blushed with shame and brutally drove the beautiful Phyllis away; who was loud in her reproaches for his abandonment, and who retired in great confusion before her master's

wrath. There was among the Romans a very widespread and inveterate prejudice which looked upon intimate relations between a free man and a slave girl as dishonorable. Xanthias was inconsolable at having revealed his secret in spite of himself, and he barely listened to the reasoning of Horace, who sought to justify in the eyes of his friend an amorous weakness the blame for which he would gladly have taken on his own head. Horace praised, in the least equivocal fashion, Xanthias' accomplice and left the latter with a sort of jealousy which put Phyllis back into his esteem. Following Horace's advice, Xanthias began by freeing this slave in order that he might not have to blush at his relations with her. Horace had sent him an ode, in which the poet flattered Phyllis in the most delicate manner, by comparing her to the white Briseis, loved of Achilles, to Tecmesse, loved of Ajax, her master, and to the Trojan virgin with whom Agamemnon was taken after the fall of Troy: "Do not blush to love your slave girl, O Xanthias!" he said. "How do you know but the blonde Phyllis has noble parents who would be proud of their son-in-law? Undoubtedly, she weeps for a royal birth and the rigor of her penates. No, she whom you have loved is not of vile blood; so faithful and disinterested as she is, she could not have been born of a mother for whom she would have had to blush. If I praise her arms, her face and her limbs, my heart is not in it. Do not become suspicious of a friend whose eighth lustrum time is hastening to a close." For Horace, at forty years, was no less sensually curious than he was at twenty. And what he had seen of Phyllis tormented him with a secret impatience for seeing again, at his ease, so charming a girl. The care which he took, in his ode to Xanthias, to proclaim himself free from all desire, would seem to prove the contrary. And it is probable that Phyllis was grateful to him for having contributed to her enfranchisement. This enfranchisement delivered from her Xanthias, whom she did not love, and, once mistress of herself, she fell head over heels in love with Telephus, whom Horace already had for a rival. Telephus did not remain attached to her for long, and he yielded

his place to Horace, who addressed a consoling ode to the blonde Phyllis, by way of inviting her to come and celebrate with him, in one of his villas, the Ides of April, the month consecrated to the Marine Venus: "Telephus whom you desire was not born for you; young, voluptuous and rich, he is the property of another, who holds him in a gentle slavery, like Phaëton, struck with a thunderbolt, and Bellerophon, whom Pegasus, impatient of the bridle of a mortal, cast down upon the earth: this example should serve to repress hopes which are too ambitious. Do not look above you but, trembling to elevate your hope too high, seek only your equal. Come, O my last love, for after you, I shall not burn for any other. Learn airs which your adorable voice shall repeat for me: songs which shall charm away my dark chagrin!" Phyllis had become a courtezan, and her talent as an auletris won distinction for her among the singers who were praised at the feasts; although Horace called her his last love (*meorum finis amorum*), he gave her yet one more preferred rival.

Glycera was the one whom he loved next; he knew her through Tibullus, who had loved her before him, or rather, she had been to him as much of a sweetheart as she could be to anyone; Horace had no respite until he had replaced in her affections Tibullus, or rather the youth who had succeeded Tibullus. "Do not be so sad, Alvius, at remembering the rigors of Glycera," he wrote to his friend Tibullus. "Must you sigh forth eternal elegies because a younger man has eclipsed you in the eyes of a faithless one?" Horace was rich enough and amiable enough to make it worth Glycera's while to wink at his gray hair, hidden under a wreath of roses; she accepted the gifts and the worship of Horace; she gave him rendezvous in a delicious house, in which she had set up the capital of her amorous empire; Horace sent her this note at the moment she was making her toilet amid her *ancillae* and her *ornatrices*, preparatory to receiving her new lover: "O Venus, queen of Gnidos and of Paphos, disdain your cherished sojourn at Cyprus; come to the brilliant house of Glycera, who summons you with clouds of incense; bring with you warmest Love, the

Graces with knotted cinctures, and the Nymphs and Mercury and Youth, which without you has no more charms!" This Glycera possessed all the qualities of a consummate courtezan; she exercised an irresistible influence over the senses of Horace, who gave himself to the ardors of his new passion with so much transport that his health was altered, the irritability of his nerves being increased by these excesses. He fell then into spasmodic crises, which exhausted him even more than his amorous ecstasies, and often, on leaving the arms of his mistress, he would abandon himself to somber reveries inspired by a sort of black malady which has been produced in him by jealousy and which jealousy threatened to aggravate every day. But this jealousy had been so often unfortunate for him in his amours that he made a violent effort to hide it, and, in the effort, would often grow dizzy in the midst of feasts. "I think I am losing my reason," he said to his ancient rival Telephus, who had become his friend and table companion. "Where are the flutes of Berecynthe? Why is that hautboy suspended near the mute lyre? I hate idle hands: strew roses! Let the noise of our madness awake the incensed Lycus and the young neighbor so ill-treated with her old spouse. Your black hair, O Telephus, your eyes, gentle and brilliant as the star of evening, still draw the amorous Rhoda, while I languish, I burn for my Glycera. . . ." In alluding to the verdant youth of Telephus, he was recurring sadly to his own forty-three years, his graying hair, his bald head, his reddened eyes, his wrinkles and his yellow complexion. Glycera, adroit courtezan that she was, still avoided evoking unpleasant thoughts, and sometimes Horace, seated or rather couched at table with her, would believe that he had lost nothing more than his wine in growing old. Then with his verve as a poet, he would grow warm and become young again in singing of Glycera: "The son of Jupiter and of Semele, the voluptuous desires and their cruel mother, order me to give my heart to love, which I had thought was finished for me; I burn for Glycera! I love the glow of her skin, brilliant and pure as Parian marble; I love her charming caprices and the perilous

vivacity of her glances; Venus pursues me and fastens herself on me; in place of singing of the savage tribes of Scythia and the Parthian knight, who is so redoubtable as he flees, my lyre has nothing left but songs of love. Slaves, place upon the altar a green gauze, the vervain, incense and a goblet of wine: the blood of a victim shall disarm the goddess.” Commentators have been very much concerned with this sacrifice, and they have not agreed as to the goddess to whom Horace desired to make his offering. It was Venus, according to some; it was Glycera apotheosized, according to others. There has been much debate on another point, equally difficult to clear up; who was the victim whom the poet proposed to immolate (*mactata hostia*)? The learned Dacier has assumed that the Greeks and Romans never stained themselves with the blood of sacrifices offered to Venus. In response to this learned argument, the latest biographer of Horace has cited a passage of Tacitus, according to which there can be no doubt that the altars of Venus were stained with blood like those of the other gods and goddesses; care merely was taken that the animals sacrificed, she-goats, heifers, and doves, should not be males. The sacrifice which is referred to in the ode of Horace to Glycera might well have been of a more erotic sort, for a lover who was familiar with evil spells, and who desired above all a guaranty against the knot of impotence, might burn incense and vervain on the altars of his lares, spill a patera of wine on the flame and then transform his mistress into a sacrificial victim for Venus.

During his liaison with Glycera, Horace became involved in pitiless quarrels with a number of mistresses whom he had had, and who counted upon remaining his friends. We may suppose, with reason, that it was at the instigation of Glycera he showed no further favors to Chloris nor to Pholoe nor to Chloe nor even to his dear Lydia. He outraged, in his verses, those whom he had hymned before with the greatest tenderness. It is impossible not to recognize the hatred of Glycera for Lydia in this insulting ode: “The young debauchees come less frequently to beat with fearless blows on your window and trouble your sleep; your door remains

chained to the threshold, that door which turns so easily on its hinges. Already, you hear less and less this refrain: ‘While I watch through the long nights, Lydia, you are asleep!’ Soon, old and withered, at the corner of a solitary street, you, in turn, will weep for the disdain of your vilest lovers. When burning desires and that heat which causes mares to rut shall be lighted once more in your ulcerated heart, you will groan to think of that joyous youth, crowned with myrtle and with verdant ivy, which gives withered crowns to the frozen Hebru.” Horace, who had the courage to insult Lydia and to picture her as a meretrix of the street corner, soliciting passersby—Horace did not have the least remorse in sacrificing to some resentment of Glycera the aged Chloris and her daughter Pholoe, who was then one of the famosae in the modes. “Wife of the impoverished Ibis, put an end to your debaucheries and your infamous labors. When you are so near to death, cease to play among the young girls and to cast a shadow among those white stars. What sits well enough with Pholoe no longer sits with you, O Chloris! Let your daughter, like a Bacchante, excited by the sound of the cymbals, besiege the houses of young Romans; let her, in her love for Nothus, run wild like a lascivious nanny goat; as for you, old lady, it is the fleeces of Luceria and not citharas which are becoming to you. Not the rose with its purpling colors: from a barrel of wine, one does not drain the lees.” Horace, in place of tearing a few pages from his book of odes, added to it many bitter, many cruel ones which, however, could not efface the love-songs of his youth. He was forty-seven years old; he was foolishly enamored of Glycera, and, in publishing the collection of his odes, he mingled them in such a manner that the public might not be able to retrieve the chronological sequence of his mistresses and his amours in these verse fragments, which he had composed to immortalize them; but Glycera was not yet satisfied with the place which the poet had reserved for her in this collection; she was irritated and dismissed her too docile lover, and although the latter wished to return to

her good graces, she was unable to pardon the imaginary wrongs he had done her.

Horace endeavored futilely to inspire her with jealousy; and to prove to her that he could do without her, he turned to an ancient mistress, whom at least he had not insulted; he spared nothing in his efforts to become her lover once more. This mistress was Chloe, that beautiful Thracian slave, whom he had been the first to possess, and who had not been able to hold him because of her naïve and childish tenderness. The blond Chloe had acquired experience and had become a courtezan of vogue; she was, at this time, at the height of her graces, talents and reputation; she had about her a brilliant court of admirers; she was to be seen with them everywhere, on the promenade, in the theatre, in the baths, by the sea; her luxuries surpassed those of her rivals, and yet, she was kept only by a young merchant named Gyges. This Gyges she undoubtedly loved, for the reason that he had no equal in beauty, but she was attached to him most of all because of his fortune. They lived together as man and wife till Gyges encountered another courtezan called Asteria; he fell in love with her at once and thought no more of anything except breaking with Chloe, who watched over him as over a treasure. He pretended a voyage into Bithynia, where, he said, business called him. He left, promising Asteria that he would not return except to her. As soon as he was gone, his love for Asteria showed itself in a shower of presents, which fed the increasing jealousy of Chloe. Asteria received incessant letters from the traveler; Chloe received none. The latter did not even know in what country he was while Gyges was resolved never to return to Rome except with the object of never again quitting his Asteria's side. Chloe was beside herself, at once furious and desolated; she learned that Gyges had gone from Bithynia to Epirus, and she sent him there an emissary laden with suppliant and passionate letters.

The moment was ill-chosen to make Chloe forget the absence; Horace was repulsed by this beautiful and abandoned creature, who did not spare him her disdain. Horace revenged himself,

not only by an epigram against the proud Chloe, but also by taking up the gauntlet for Asteria, whose friend and helper he became. He addressed to her an ode in which he encouraged her to remain faithful to her faithful Gyges and to have no fear of the intrigues of her abandoned rival: "Asteria, take care that your neighbor, Enipeus, does not please you more than he should. No one, it is true, guides a horse on the field of Mars with more adroitness, and none more quickly breasts, as a swimmer, the waters of the Tiber. Of an evening, close your doors to the sounds of the plaintive flute; do not cast your eyes in the street, and when he calls you a hundred times cruel, remain inflexible!" He informed her that the emissary of Chloe had endeavored in vain to move the heart of Gyges, that heart which belonged thereafter to Asteria alone; he might rejoice in the despair of Chloe, but the ill success of his amorous efforts with this courtezan had left in his own heart a bitter discouragement; he thought to get justice by invoking Venus one last time, Venus who so often had been favorable to him: "I have rejoiced, times past, in my triumphs over young girls, and I have served, not without glory, under the banner of Love; today, I consecrate to Venus of the Sea my arms and my lyre, which is no longer suited to these combats; I hang them up, at the goddess' left hand, on the walls of her temple. Place there also the torches, the handspikes and the hatchets, which threaten closed doors. O goddess, you who reign in the fortunate island of Cyprus and at Memphis, where the snows of Sithonia are never known, O sovereign of love, deign only to touch with your divine whip the arrogant Chloe!"

But Horace had said adieu to Venus too soon; he realized with joy that he might yet have a right to the favors of the goddess. He saw, or perhaps saw again, Lyde, the clever *chanteuse* who played the lyre at the feasts; he was not long in arranging with her an amorous alliance, and he borrowed, certainly, from his purse the chief means of seduction. He first placed his projects under the auspices of Mercury, god of poets, of thieves and of merchants: "Inspire me," he says to this god of the courtezans,

"inspire me with songs which shall captivate the ear of the savage Lyde! As the young mare bounds sportively on the plain and flees the approach of the courser, the day flees me and love mocks me once more." But she was not slow in coming to her senses, and she often came to sing at the feasts, where Horace drew from the depths of his old amphorae his skeptic and insouciant philosophy. The odes which he addresses to Lyde are above all invitations to a drinking bout: "What could one better do with a day sacred to Neptune? Come, Lyde, bring forth the Cecubum, hidden in the depths of the cellar, and take sobriety in its own trenches . . . We shall sing, in turn: myself, Neptune and the green locks of the Nereides; you, on your ivory lyre, shall hymn Latona and the swift arrows of Diana. Our last song shall be for the goddess who reigns at Gnidos and the brilliant Cyclades, and who flies to Paphos on a chariot drawn by swans. We shall play also to the Night the hymns which are her due." In an ode to Quintus Hirpinus, Horace, who has white hair but who crowns his locks with roses, counts still on the songstress Lyde to enlighten the repast where Bacchus dissipates gnawing care: "Slave, see that the ardent Falernian is promptly refreshed in that spring which is far from us. And you, put out of Lyde's house the gallant whom she has received in passing (*quis devium scor-tum elicit domo Lyden*); tell her to make haste. And let her come here with her ivory lyre, her hair negligently knotted in the manner of the women of Sparta."

It is ended. The amorous career of Horace ends in the hands of Lyde; he does not seek any more the society of courtesans; he does not love women any more; he knows that he no longer possesses anything of what is needed to please them, and so he no longer exposes himself to their disdain and their refusal; but he invokes Venus once more: "After a long truce, O Venus, you declare war on me anew! I am no longer what I was under the reign of the amiable Cinara; I have now counted ten lustra; do not endeavor any more, cruel mother of tender loves, to curve under your yoke, hitherto so sweet, a heart which has become a

rebel! Go where the passionate vows of youth call you; take on the wings of your gleaming swans, your pleasures to the house of Maximus, if you are seeking a heart made for love . . . As for me, adieu to boys, adieu to women, adieu the credulous hope of a tender return! Adieu the combats of wine and the new flowers with which I used to love to adorn my head! But alas! Why Ligurinus, why these furtive tears which flow down my cheeks? Why in the midst of speech does my voice die away, silent and embarrassed? Night, in my dreams, it is you whom I embrace; you whom I pursue on the grass of the Field of Mars, cruel one, and into the waters of the Tiber!" Horace is enamored of the handsome Ligurinus, and this shameful passion fills his last years. The favorite of courtezans, the poet of the graces and of amours, dishonors his own white hairs and abandons himself to the most hideous distractions of Roman Prostitution.

## CHAPTER XXV

HORACE was barely born when Catullus, that great poet of love or, rather, of sensual pleasure, died at the age of thirty-six years, a victim of the abuse of pleasure, according to some historians, but who, according to others, merely had succumbed to the weakness of his own delicate and sickly nature, despite the precautions of a calm and chaste life. This life, in any case, had not always been so, for the poems of Catullus, however mutilated and expurgated they have been by the censorship of the first centuries of Christianity, still breathe an erotic license and the Epicurean philosophy. The poet, a friend of Cornelius Nepos and of Cicero, composed his verses in the midst of the libertines and courtezans of Rome; he even speaks their language; in his verses, adorned with all the graces of style, he never recoils before the obscene word, which he sounds with a sort of effrontery in the midst of an eloquent and harmonious phrase; he delights in the images and mysteries of the most hardened debauchery, but he has the excuse of being naïve in the things which he dares to say and to depict. It is evident that his voyages and his sojourns in Asia, in Greece and in Africa, had left him in ignorance of nothing that went to make up the impure mosaic of Roman prostitution. And yet, in an epigram against his detractors, the *patient* Aurelius and the *cinaedus*, Furius, (*pathice*), who, judging by his voluptuous verses (*molliculi*), had supposed that he was none too modest himself, he does not hesitate to defend his modesty: “A good poet,” he says, “must be chaste; but is it necessary for his verses to be so? They have enough salt and enough harmony, however voluptuous and far from decent they may be, when they possess the power of awakening the senses, not merely of young lads, but also of those barbarous old men who are no longer able to move their exhausted loins.” Catullus

was too well instructed in the secrets of Venus not to have acquired that knowledge and that experience at the expense of his health.

He makes us acquainted in his poems, the half of which have not come down to us, with three or four Greek courtesans who were his mistresses and his women friends; they were in the mode in his day (50 to 60 years B. C.), but their reputation, mind, talents and graces, however brilliant they may have been in the period of their amours, did not last long enough for us to find a reflection of it in the works of Horace. There is but Lesbia, whose name, immortalized by Catullus, has survived through the sparrow which she so wept over; and again, according to the commentators, this Lesbia, daughter of a Senator, Metellus Celer, was called Claudia and did not belong to the courtezan class. Moreover, the poet seems to have avoided, in his verses addressed to Lesbia or to her sparrow, admitting a detail which might have been taken as personal; he does not sketch the portrait of this beauty; he does not even reveal to us the color of her hair; he limits himself to the enumeration of kisses, a thousand times given and received, the number of which he so confuses that the envious can never count them: "You ask me, Lesbia, how many of your kisses I need in order to have enough and too much? As many grains of sand as there are in Libya, in the deserts of Cyrene, from the temple of Jupiter Ammon to the sacred tomb of the old Battus; as many stars as in the silence of the night are witnesses of the furtive loves of the human species!" This Lesbia, whom Catullus had so nicknamed by allusion to her Lesbian tastes, and whom he compared to Sappho in translating for her the ode of the celebrated philosopher of Lesbos, is better known through her sparrow than by reason of her gallant manners. This sparrow, the delight of Lesbia, who loved to play with it and who hid it in her bosom, which she teased with her finger, and which she loved to provoke to bite her while she was waiting for her lovers and seeking to destroy the ennui of waiting; this sparrow, the death of which Catullus sang, was not a bird, if one adheres to the tra-

dition preserved by the scholiasts; it was a young girl, the companion of Lesbia, who loved her as much as she did her lover. "Weep, O Graces, weep, Loves, and all you who are beautiful among men! It is dead, the sparrow of my mistress, the sparrow which was her delight,, and which she loved more than the light of her own eyes!" But the scholiasts of Catullus have, perhaps, abused the privileges of an interpreter by basing their interpretations on the beautiful imitation of Sappho's ode which the poet did not fear to dedicate to Lesbia; we will not argue, against this view, that Catullus intended merely to mourn for a sparrow: "O, miserable sparrow! this is your work: the eyes of my mistress are inflamed and red with weeping."

Catullus was so passionately taken with Lesbia that he did not foresee where this passion which she thus shared with him would lead: "Let us live, O my Lesbia!" he cried, "let us live and love!" But the young girl, although better loved than any will ever be again, was the first to tire of love, and dismissed her lover. The latter did not endeavor to regain her heart, from which he had been ejected; he did not weep over the rupture, which he looked upon as being inevitable; he resolved merely to forget Lesbia, and not love in the future with the same self-abnegation: "Adieu, Lesbia!" he says sorrowfully; "already Catullus has hardened his heart; he will not pursue you any more, he will not supplicate you any more; but you, you, faithless one, shall weep when the nights shall pass with no one to address prayers to you. What fate is reserved for you now? Who will seek you out? To whom shall you appear beautiful? Who will love you? Whose will you be? Who shall have your kisses? What lips will you bite? And you, Catullus, since it is the will of destiny, harden yourself!" Catullus soon perceived that he had counted too much on his strength of soul and that he was not to be comforted for the inconstancy of Lesbia; he loved her absent; he loved her always; amid a hundred other mistresses: "O, gods!" he murmured, drying his tears, "if your divine nature permits you pity, and if ever you have borne succor to poor wretches in

the agony of death, look upon my misery, and, in return for a pure life, take away from me this evil, this poison, which, gliding like a torpor into the marrow of my bones, has chased all joys from my heart!" For a long time after, he could not think without emotion of his love and of her who had inspired it; he grew indignant one day at hearing Lesbia being compared to the mistress of Mamurra, who had neither the little nose, the well-made foot, the black eyes, the long fingers, the soft skin nor the seductive voice of the true Lesbia: "Oh, stupid and gross century!" he repeated, sighing.

Lesbia was married, or rather, she had formed one of those concubine liaisons which the Roman law included in the category of marriage by *usucapio*. She lived with a man who was called her husband (*maritus*) and who was perhaps but a jealous master. She sometimes saw Catullus in the presence of this husband, whom she dared not deceive, although she would well have liked to do so. In order better to feign forgetfulness of the past and tranquilize the mind of her husband, whom she secretly regretted having preferred to her lover, she would address, in a loud tone of voice, reproaches and even insults to Catullus: "It is a great joy for that imbecile!" says the poet, who consoles himself by making an epigram against the husband. "Ass, you understand nothing! If she were silent and forgot our love, that would be a sign she was cured of it; when she grumbles and hurles invectives at me, it means not only that she remembers, but also, which is far more serious, that she is irritated; it means that she is still burning and cannot hide it!" And yet, one does not glean from the poems of Catullus any more positive proofs of the passion which she preserved for him. If it was an illusion, he did nothing to remove it, and he contented himself with looking upon Lesbia in the power of her husband, without any attempt to make her unfaithful to the latter. One day, at the theater, a murmur of admiration accompanied the arrival of a courtezan named Quintia, who came to take her place on the seats near Lesbia, as though to eclipse the latter and vanquish her beauty;

all eyes, the truth is, were fixed on the newcomer, and no one looked at Lesbia, except Catullus, who had eyes only for her. Indignant over the unjust preference which the people accorded to Quintia, he took his tablets and improvised this piece of verse, which he circulated among the spectators in order to avenge Lesbia: “Quintia is beautiful for the majority; for me she is pale, lean and lanky. I will readily confess that she has a few advantages, but I deny absolutely that she is beautiful, for in that great body, there is no grace nor attractiveness. Lesbia, on the contrary, is beautiful, and so beautiful from head to foot that she seems to have snatched from others all the graces.”

*Lesbia formosa est; quae quum pulcherrima tota est,  
Tum omnibus una omnes surripuit veneres.*

One might say that Catullus, in his poems, has given this Lesbia no rival, for he did not cease to love her after he had ceased to possess her. One would say that his muse would have blushed to pronounce the name of another mistress. We find but a single name, that of Ipsithilla, which shines for a moment beside that of Lesbia, and which disappears like a meteor after a day of amorous folly. This Ipsithilla, was, to judge by her name, a Greek courtezan, and in order to reproduce in our language the gallant note which Catullus sent her one day, we must make use of nothing less than the discreet translation of a university professor: “In the name of love, gentle Ipsithilla, my delight, charm of my life, accord me the rendezvous which I implore for the middle of the day; and if you do accord me this, add this favor, that the door may be barred to all the world. Above all, do not go out! . . . Stay in the house and prepare yourself to see me renew nine times my amorous exploits (*paresque nobis novem continuas futationes*). But if you say yes, say it at once; for, extended upon my couch after a good dinner, I am milling in my ardor and my tunic and my bedcovers.” This epigram, which explains to us why Catullus died so young, is the only one in which

he mentions by name one of his mistresses. In another epigram, which he addresses to the inmates of a bad house, he complains bitterly of the loss of a mistress whom he does not name, whom he had loved as one had never loved before, and for whom he had done battle many times. This woman had quitted him in order to take refuge in a house of debauchery, the ninth house one came to on leaving the temple of Castor and Pollux. There, she prostituted herself indifferently to the ignoble guests of this lupanar (*omnes pusilli, et semitarii moechi*), who kept a guard over their prey and who did not permit Catullus to enter the house, where there were about a hundred in number: "Do you think you are the only man," he cries to them wrathfully (*solis putatis esse mentulas vobis?*) "Do they think that they alone have the right to frequent public women and to look upon the rest of the world as castrates?" He defies them, he threatens to write of the violence which has been done him on the very walls of the evil place, in which they refuse to give him what they were in the habit of giving everyone for a certain price in silver. He is near to measuring himself against two hundred adversaries. But all he can do is to keep on insisting, crying and praying, while listening to the voice of his sweetheart, who is giving herself to the *contubernales*. He shivers all night at the door.

Surely, we are not to recognize Lesbia in the heroine of these debaucheries, in the scandalous hostess of this all-famed tavern. The husband of Lesbia, that Lesbius whom Catullus treats with so much contempt, may have sold her for this rôle; but he would not have permitted her to sink to this degree of prostitution. Catullus well might say to Lesbia that he esteemed her less, but he was forced to confess with signs that he loved her still: *Amentem injuria talis cogit amare magis, sed bene velle minus*. He continued, however, to lead his life in the society of courtesans, and he was, frequently, the victim of their deceits; thus we see him highly irritated against a certain Aufilena, who had demanded of him in advance the price of favors which she had afterward refused him: "Honor demands, Aufilena, that one keep

one's word, even as modesty demands that you promise me nothing; but to steal by deceiving is still worse than the act of an avaricious courtezan who prostitutes herself to all comers." In addition, he is indignant with the shameful prostitute who has robbed him of his tablets; he calls her a *stinking strumpet* (*pudida moecha*); he loads her with insults, without obtaining the restitution of his tablets; she is unmoved and only laughs; he ends by laughing himself and by changing his tact: "Chaste and pure young girl," he says to her, "give me back my tablets." Catullus felt himself at the end of his physical forces; barely aged thirty-four, he was on the verge of decrepitude; he had to renounce all the pleasures which had brought him, in so short a time, to a premature old age; but he did not renounce Lesbia. She was no more than a memory with which he rediscovered the pleasures of his ardent youth; it was still of love that he sang in tender or passionate verses; sometimes he would curse Lesbia, even going so far as to outrage her; then at once, as though to obtain her pardon, he would admire, exalt and invoke her in the manner of a divinity; "No woman can say that she is so tenderly loved as you were by me, O my Lesbia! Never has the faith of treaties been more religiously preserved than were our oaths of love by me! But look where you have led me by your fault, and what a sacrifice has been demanded of my fidelity! . . . for I never again could esteem you, though you were to become the most virtuous of women, nor could I cease to love you if you were to become the most debauched!" The senses were silent in Catullus; the heart alone spoke and this supreme voice still found its home in the soul of Lesbia. She learned that her former lover had but a little while to live; she believed that chagrin was all that was the matter with him and wished to cure him; she came to him with open arms, and Catullus threw himself into them forgetting everything else. Lesbia had revived the dead; Catullus was reanimated, to write with a trembling hand these admirable verses:

*Restituis cupido, atque insperanti ipsa refers te  
Nobis, O lucem candiore notâ!  
Quis me uno vivit felicior, aut magis haec quid  
Optandum vita, dicere quis poterit!*

“You give yourself to me, who desire you so! You come back to me who hoped for you unceasingly; O day which must be marked with the whitest stone! Who then is happier than I upon the earth, and who could say that there is in life anything preferable to such happiness?” Catullus had nothing but verses to express his joy and his appreciation; his dim eye lighted up, an unaccustomed blush glowed on his hollow cheeks, furrowed with tears; he pressed to his bosom this cherished mistress, who wept as she looked at him; he breathed his last sigh in those verses, in which he flattered himself that he was to go on living and loving Lesbia: “So you promise me, O life of mine, that our life shall be full of charm and shall last forever? Great gods! May she only promise and keep her promise, and may what she says to me be said sincerely and from the heart! Thus, we may make last as long as our life this sacred bond of an eternal friendship!” Of what sort could these courtesans have been who knew how to make themselves loved with so exquisite a delicacy, with a devotion that was almost religious! Catallus died at thirty-six, happy at having found his Lesbia again (56 B. C.). The finest praise which could be given this Lesbia is to recall the love, so tender and so constant, which she inspired in the libertine poet, who respects her always in the verses which he addresses to her, and who does not fear, moreover, to take his muse for a walk amid the most mysterious mire of Roman prostitution.

Propertius was born before Catullus had died. Propertius, who must also have been, according to the bizarre expression of one rhetorician, “One of the triumvirs of love,” first saw the day in Etruria, in the city of Perusia or in Mevania in the year 702 of Rome, 52 B. C. Propertius became a poet by reading the poems of Catullus; he had become a lover by seeing Cynthia. The true

name of this beauty was Hostia, or Hostilia. Her flatterers even pretended that she was a descendent of Tellus Hostilius, the third king of Rome; but however this may have been, she could boast, with certitude, of being the direct descendent of her father Hostilius, an erudite writer who composed a history of the war in Istria. This Hostilia, whose beauty, graces and talents had placed her among the most remarkable women of her time, was, however, nothing more than a courtezan. She truly loved Propertius, but nevertheless, she had no scruples about giving him as many rivals as she was able to satisfy. She was careful not to permit him to employ the same liberty on his side; she even prescribed for him the most rigorous fidelity. Nevertheless, she lived publicly with a rich praetor of Illyria, named Statilius Taurus, who had built at his own expense an amphitheater, and who dispensed as much money for her as he did for his wild-beast combat. Propertius, who did not grow rich from his poetry, would have been at some pains to provide for the prodigalities of his Delia; he accepted therefore, of necessity, the competition, not much to be feared, of the praetor of Illyria in the good graces of Hostilia; he closed his eyes and ears, from habit, each time that he might hear of this permanent rival; but he would suffer no others, or at least, he would make a bad face at those who shared, in passing, the favors of his mistress. Thus, on coming home one evening unexpectedly from Mevania, impatient to be once again in the arms of his mistress, he heard the sounds of a flute, and he saw the house gleaming with lights. He approached with some anxiety and entered with stupefaction; the slaves hid when they saw him coming; none dared to stop him and all desired to prevent his going further; there was a fete in the triclinium, with dancing and song and the odor of aromatic spices; he summoned a freed man, who did not respond. He seized by the ears a slave, Lygdamus, who was attempting to flee; he demanded to know, in an imperious voice, who was the magnificent guest who was receiving such a welcome in Cynthia's house. Was it a consul? Was it a senator? Was it an actor, a gladiator or a

eunuch? Lygdamus kept silent; he would have parted with his two ears rather than open his mouth; but Propertius had other business than with the ears of Lygdamus; he went direct to the triclinium, drew the curtains of the door and shot a glance into the hall, where the odor of food and spices revealed to him what was going on. As a matter of fact, before a sumptuously laden table was a couch of ivory, purple and silver, holding on the same cushions Hostilia and Statilius Taurus, embracing and smiling at each other. At this sight, he became calm and grave; he dropped the curtain and retired with a tranquil step: "Fool!" he said to Lygdamus, who still feared for his ears, "why did you not tell me at once that the praetor had arrived from Illyria?" He returned to his own house and passed the night which he had reserved for more pleasant employment, in commerce with the Muses, the only infidelity which he permitted himself with respect to his unfaithful one. The following day he sent her an elegy, which began thus: "So he has come back to Illyria, that praetor, your rich prey, Cynthia, and my greatest despair! Why has he not left his life amid the Acroceraunian rocks? Ah! Neptune, what offerings I should have given you then! . . . Today, and without me, they feast at a full table, and all the night, except for me alone, your door is open. Yes, if you are wise, do not quit for a moment that harvest which is offered to you, but rob of all his wool that stupid sheep. Afterwards, when his riches are gone, he will remain poor and without resources, and then tell him to take sail for other Illyrias." Such advice on the part of a lover did not bear witness to an extreme delicacy.

Cynthia was not only beautiful; her lover called her *learned* and spoke many times, of her education, of her mind and of her talents; it is known, also, that she was a poet, and her taste for poetry must have been the principal bond which attached her to Propertius; the latter, as a matter of fact could only repay her in verses. In his elegies, he often sketches the portrait of this distinguished courtesan; he informs us that she had a majestic figure, blond hair and an admirable hand. "Ah! her attrac-

tions," he cries to a friend, "are the least nourishment to my flame. O, Bassus; she has many other perfections, for which I would even give my life: there is her ingenuous blush; there is her brilliancy and thousand talents; there are those delicious pleasures hidden under her discreet robe (*gaudia sub tacitâ ducere veste libet.*)" He found his Cynthia sufficiently perfect to be able to dispense with her toilet and even her veil when he had the happiness to possess her by day or night: "Dear soul," he cries to her in transport, "why display so many ornaments in your hair? Why that myrrh of Oronte which you scatter over your head? Why that study to give the proper play to the folds of that thin robe, woven in the Isle of Cos? Why sell yourself to the lust of these barbarians? Why, under an attire so dearly bought, stifle the beauties of nature and prevent your charms from shining with their own beauty? Believe me, you are too beautiful to resort to such artifices. Love is nude; he does not love such strategems." The axiom of Propertius was always that of a tender and sensible lover: "A girl who pleases one man is well enough adorned." But Cynthia was obstinate about preserving, in the most intimate tête-a-tête, the annoying paraphernalia of her clothes and jewels. Propertius, in initiating us into the mysteries of an amorous night, complains bitterly of this habit, due to modesty or to prudery, which he might have explained by the discovery of some deformity or some hidden imperfection; he represents Cynthia as incessantly drawing her tunic over her bosom even though the lamp had been put out: "Of what use is it," he would say to her, "to condemn Venus to do battle in the darkness? If you do not know it, the eyes are our guides in love. It was naked, and as she came forth from the couch of Menelaus, that Helen, at Sparta, lighted in the heart of Paris the fire which consumed him; it was nude that Endymion captivated the heart of Artemis; it was nude also that the goddess slept with him (*nudae concubuisse deae*). If, then, you persist in sleeping clad, you shall see whether my hands are clever at picking a tunic to pieces. What is more, if you push my anger far enough, you will be show-

ing your mother tomorrow your bruised arms. . . . Is it that your pendant throat prevents you from giving yourself to these pastimes? That might be, if you were ashamed of showing the traces of maternity." Cynthia took no account of these fine reasonings, and Propertius was forced to be content with what she offered: "If she will only give me a few nights like those," he exclaimed intoxicatedly, "my life shall be a long one in a single year; if she gives me many others, I, in those nights, shall believe myself immortal. In one night, each of us may become a god!"

This love, however, was not without its clouds. Cynthia had to give herself each day to the exigencies of her trade; for without counting the praetor of Illryia, she had other gallants who helped pay for the upkeep of her house. She did not give, therefore, to Propertius, all the favors which he claimed by right of being her declared lover; she frequently kept him in the discard; she would close her door to him, at least of a night, for her nights belonged to mercenary love; but she would cover as far as possible with respectable pretexts the disrespectful truth, which wounded the heart of the poet; she would blame on the fates of Isis, Juno or some goddess the continence which she imposed, regrettfully she said: "And now have come again those sorrowful solemnities of Isis," wrote Propertius one day. "Already Cynthia has passed ten nights far from me! Perish the daughter of Inachus, who from the slothful banks of the Nile, has transmitted her mysteries to the matrons of Ausonia, she who so often separates two lovers who are avid to be joined! Whoever this goddess was, she has always been fatal to love!" And yet, Propertius did not doubt that Isis alone was to blame for the scruples and the refusals of Cynthia, whom he endeavored to soften by saying to her: "Certainly no woman enters with pleasure her solitary bed; there is something which love forces you to wish for. Passion is always more lively in the case of absent lovers; a long pleasure always becomes a bore to assiduous lovers." Cynthia lets him talk on and changes nothing of her way of life. Not only did she reserve for the rivals of Propertius the nights which she pretended to

give to Isis, but she even passed a part of her nights in drinking, singing and playing dice. Propertius, moreover, could not have been in ignorance of why his mistress was so opulent, and since he did not possess the treasures of Attalus to pay for this luxury, the impure source of which he knew, he was reduced to the necessity of sighing in the most poetic fashion in the world: “Did Corinth ever see, in the house of Lais, such affluence, when all Greece was sighing at her door!” he cries, vowing that his Cynthia was but a courtezan in the mode. “Was there ever a court more numerous around the feet of Thais, dramatized by Menander, and who so long enlivened the leisure of the people of Erichtea! That Phryne, who might have raised Thebes from her cinders, did she have the joy of counting more admirers! No, O Cynthia, you surpass them all, and what is more, you make yourself a parentage according to your caprices, in order to legitimize the kisses which you are so afraid of lacking!” These reproaches, sufficiently obscure, signify undoubtedly that Cynthia passed off her lovers, whom she received with the most touching hospitality, as her relations; for the rest, Propertius was so jealous of her that he sometimes suspected her of hiding the lover under her robe (*et miser in tunicâ suspicor esse virum*).

It was not merely at Rome that Cynthia gathered about her this throng of competitors, all more or less smitten and more or less generous; it was also at Baiae, where she kept her court during the season of the thermal waters. The city of Baiae and the environs beheld them as their guests the *élite* among the rich, the corrupt and the pleasure seeking. The Greek courtezans of renown would have looked upon themselves as out of it if they had not displayed their insolent luxury among the orgies which took place in this city of lights; they came there to seek new intrigues and new profits. Propertius was, then, jealous of Baiae as he would have been of ten rivals at one and the same time: “O Cynthia! have you any thought of me?” he wrote to her during her absences, when he fed on nothing but memories of the past and hopes for the future. “Do you recall the nights which

we have spent together? What is the place which I still keep in your heart? Perhaps, at this moment, an enemy rival is wishing that I would efface your name from my verses." Propertius, who had not the right, nor perhaps the means, to join her at Baiae was indignant against this corrupt place, against those banks which witnessed so many amorous encounters, against that reef for the chastity of women: "Ah! May they perish forever," he cried, "may Baiae and its waters perish, which engender all the crimes of love!" In addition, he could no longer delude himself as to the object of this voyage to Baiae; he was not unaware, moreover, that Cynthia had no other revenue than that of her charms; he knew this, because he had seen her at work: "Cynthia does not seek Fasces," he published abroad in a moment of despite, "she does not care for honors; it is always the purse of lovers that she weighs . . . thus then, one may make a traffic of love! O Jupiter! O Infamy! and our young women grow old by this traffic! My mistress sends me unceasingly to seek pearls for her in the seas; she commands me to go pilfer for her at Tyre! Oh! I would to the gods that no one at Rome was rich!" It is true that while Propertius was letting himself be carried away by this excess of bad humor, Cynthia, occupied with her villainous praetor, had forbidden her couch to the lover of her heart for seven consecutive nights.

Cynthia had been the first mistress of Propertius; he swore to her that she should be the last. One must believe, as a matter of fact, that he for a long time, and vainly, set her an example of constancy. He declares, in a number of places in his elegies, that he had remained faithful to this charmingly unfaithful creature, and we have seen that he pardoned her everything, as soon as she permitted him to enter her couch once more, where, the night before, another had reigned in his place; he deludes himself so little in this respect that he says to her, even while he embraces her: "You wicked creature, you cannot sleep a single night alone, nor pass alone a single day!" There were between them many quarrels, many separations, which would end in reconciliation and a

redoubling of love. In one of these amorous arguments, Propertius, the severe Propertius, wished to forget Cynthia by hurling himself like a lost soul into debauchery, by frequenting the most accessible courtesans; he had lost his ordinary modesty since the day his friend, Gallus, with the intention of distracting him and bringing a truce to the chagrins of his heart, had made him the witness for one whole night of his own amours with a new mistress: “O night, the memory of which is so sweet to me!” the poet had exclaimed, electrified by this spectacle, “O night, which I shall often evoke in my ardent vows, that voluptuous night, when I saw you, Gallus, pressing in your arms your young mistress and dying of love as you spoke broken words to her!” Upon leaving this dangerous seance, Propertius became unfaithful to Cynthia. He did not dream of giving her a rival chosen from among the matrons; he was too solicitous as to his own repose to desire anything but easy pleasures. And so he set himself, as he himself says, to follow the paths beaten by the herd and to quench his thirst with long draughts at the impure spring of public Prostitution. (*Ipsa petita lacu nunc mihi dulcis aqua est*); he adopted a maxim quite contrary to that of love: “Woe to those who like to besiege a closed door!” He was resolved to love no more, never again to abdicate his liberty: “Let all the daughters whom the Orontes and the Euphrates appear to have sent to Rome for me, let these sirens make the best of me!” And yet, he could not console himself for having quitted Cynthia, and he continued to hymn her, even while he cursed her: “Never shall old age separate me from my love,” he softly murmured, “when I ought to be a Tithon or a Nestor!” He learned, suddenly, that Cynthia had fallen ill; he ran to her and would not quit her bedside, but nursed her so tenderly that he believed he had snatched her from death. When she was convalescent: “O light of my life,” he said to her, “since you are out of danger, bear your offerings to the altars of Diana! Pay homage, also, to the goddess who was changed into a heifer (*Io*): ten nights of absence for the goddess and ten of love for me!”

Following this reconciliation, the lovers changed roles; jealousy was calmed in the heart of Propertius, only to take flame in that of Cynthia. He had been delivered, at last, of the odious malevolence which persisted in troubling his amours: Acanthis, the procuress, who had so much influence over Cynthia, who procured for the latter, perfumes, philtres and cosmetics, and who bore her messages, who was also the born protectress of rich adorers and the implacable enemy of a disinherited poet—Acanthis, that terrible megara, had breathed out her villainous soul in a fit of coughing; she was no longer there, this infamous counselor, to say to Cynthia: “Let your porter keep a watch for those who bring something; if anyone knocks with empty hands, let the porter sleep as though he were deaf, with his forehead leaning against the closed lock. Do not repel the callous hand of the sailor, if it is full of gold, nor the rude caresses of the soldier who pays, nor even those of barbarous slaves, who, with a sign suspended about their neck, gambol in the market place. Look at the gold and not at the hand which gives it. What will remain of the songs he sings you? Be deaf to those verses which are not accompanied by a present of splendid silks, to that lyre whose concords are not mingled with the sound of gold.” Propertius assisted at the last moments of Acanthis and at her shameful rites, which brought into evidence the bandelets which bound her sparse hair, her mitre, discolored and covered with filth, her she-dog, so well trained to keep watch at the door of courtezans: “Let an aged amphora with a broken neck be the cinerary urn of this abominable sorceress,” cried Propertius, “and let a wild fig tree strangle her in its roots! Let each lover come to assail her tomb with stones, and let the stones be accompanied with maledictions!” Cynthia, who no longer had the poisonous voice of Acanthis to listen to, gave free rein to her tenderness for Propertius, and, at the same time, to her jealousy. She had him spied upon and spied upon him herself; she accused him of wrongs which he had not thought of doing her, and she supposed that he had as many mistresses as she had lovers. Propertius, in vain, protested

his innocence. She crushed him with reproaches and insults; she bit him, she beat him, she scratched him and ended by martyizing herself, as though to punish herself for not being sufficiently beautiful or sufficiently loved.

This vague jealousy settled upon a courtezan named Lycinna, whose lover Propertius had been before becoming her own. Cynthia soon worked herself up into such a fury against the poor Lycinna that Propertius was obliged to implore her to make peace with this ancient rival, who had given her no cause for reproach; he confessed that he had had, in his youth, a few relations with this Lycinna, but that he barely remembered having known her, although Lycinna had taught him, in those nights of love, a science which was only too familiar to him: "Your love, my Cynthia," he said, without convincing her, "has been the tomb of all my other loves! . . . Cease, then, your persecutions against Lycinna, who has done nothing to deserve them. When your resentment, O women, is given free rein, it never comes back!" Propertius, in order to obtain that peace which was so necessary to his intellectual labors, avoided doing anything which Cynthia might interpret in a jealous sense; but since he had ceased to be jealous himself, he naturally had an indifferent air, and his mistress was all the more eager to discover the causes of this indifference. One day she pretended that she had made a vow to offer a sacrifice to Juno of Argos in her temple at Lanuvium. This temple was situated on the right of the Via Appia, not far from the walls of Rome; in the sacred grove which surrounded the temple, there was a deep cave which served as a retreat to a dragon, to which virgins each year brought offerings of wheat cakes, which they would present with their eyes covered with a bandeau; when they were pure, the monster would accept their offerings; if not, he rejected them with frightful hisses. Cynthia had nothing to bear to this dragon; she could only have business with the goddess. Her trip was, moreover, but a manner of absenting herself, leaving the field free to her lover. Propertius saw her depart in a chariot drawn by mules with long manes, led by an effeminate with a shaved face and preceded by Molossi with rich collars.

"After so many outrages done to my couch," says the poet, in recounting his adventure, "I desired, changing my bed, to pitch camp in another territory." He sent word then to two joyous courtesans, Phyllis, not very seductive on an empty stomach, but charming enough when she had had a little to drink, and Teia, white as a lily, but whom drunkenness could not content with a single lover. The first dwelt upon the Aventine hill, near the temple of Diana; the second in the groves of the Capitoline. They both came to the Esquiline quarter, where Propertius' little house was situated. Everything had been prepared to receive them in a worthy manner. Propertius promised himself thus to soften his chagrins and to revive his senses in pleasures which were unknown to him (*et venere ignotâ fulta novare mea*).

The feast was served on the grass\* at the bottom of the garden; nothing was lacking, neither wine of Methymna nor aromatic spices nor ice-cold potions nor roses in leaf; Lygdamus presided over the bottles. There was but one couch at the table, but it was large enough to accommodate three guests. Propertius placed himself between the two whom he had invited. An Egyptian was playing the flute, Phyllis played the crotalum, a deformed dwarf whistled on a wooden flageolet. But this music only increased the distraction of the poet, who, in his thoughts, was following Cynthia to the temple of Lanuvium. Phyllis and Teia, however, were drunk, and the light of the lamps had grown low; they pushed aside the table to play at dice. Propertius shook only unlucky numbers, those that were called *the dogs*; chance did not deign to let him make the throw of Venus, that is to say, the number one. Phyllis had uncovered her throat, and Teia had drawn up her tunic, while Propertius was blind and deaf (*cantabant surdo, nudabant pectora caeco*). All of a sudden, the front door creaked on its hinges, and light steps sounded in the vestibule. It was Cynthia, who came running forward, pale, her hair in disorder, her fists clenched and her eyes gleaming: it was the wrath of a woman, and one might have said it was a city taken by assault

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\**Dejeuner sur l'herbe!* Page Mr. Manet.

(*spectaculum captâ nec minus urbe fuit*). With a furious hand, she hurled the lamp into Phyllis' face; Teia, thoroughly frightened, cried fire and called for water; Cynthia pursued them, tore off their robes, pulled their hair, struck them and heaped injury on them. They barely escaped and took refuge in the first tavern which they found. The noise, however, had awakened the whole quarter. The people came running with torches; Cynthia was to be seen, like a mad Bacchante, belaboring Propertius, slapping him and biting him until the blood came and endeavoring to scratch out his eyes. Propertius, who felt that he was to blame, accepted his punishment with a secret joy; he embraced Cynthia's knees, begging her pardon and beseeching her to be appeased; she forgave him, on condition that he would not walk out any more, richly clad, under the portico of Pompey or in the Forum, and that he would not again turn his glances toward the last rows of seats in the amphitheater where the courtezans sat, and that his Lygdamus should be sold as a faithless slave, his feet laden with a double chain. Propertius consented to everything in order to expiate his impotent attempt at infidelity; he kissed the hands of his despotic mistress, who smiled at this triumph. She ended by burning perfume and bathing with pure water everything which in her eyes had been soiled by contact with Phyllis and Teia, and she ordered Propertius to change his clothes, especially his shirt, and to expose his hair three times to a sulphur flame. Finally, she caused fresh coverings to be brought for the couch, where she and her lover now took their places: such was the peace which was achieved between them (*et toto solvimus arma toro*).

Propertius must have survived his Cynthia. A rival, a vile courtezan named Nomas, who sold her nights at a villainous price on the public highway, poured the poison which one of Cynthia's lovers had caused to be prepared by a witch in order to avenge himself of an affront which he had received from his proud mistress. Propertius was absent then and could not direct the funeral, which was conducted hastily and without pomp: no perfumes were cast upon the pyre; no vase filled with wine was broken on

the smoking ashes of the victim of this black deed; there seemed to be a desire to efface all traces of the crime. When Propertius returned to Rome, Cynthia had been buried on the banks of the Anio, on the Tiber road, in the very spot which she had chosen for her sepulchre. Propertius was thunderstruck by her sudden death, but he did not seek to punish the authors of it; he was pursued, day and night, by the spectre of Cynthia, who demanded vengeance of him; but he did not dare accuse the poisoner. The latter must have been a powerful personage, for Nomas, who had been the instrument of the crime, was suddenly enriched, and swept the dust of the streets in her robe, broidered with gold; on the other hand, the women friends of Cynthia, who raised their voices in regret or in her defense, were treated without mercy, one did not know by what order or by whose power; for having placed a few wreaths on her tomb, the aged Petals was bound to the infamous block and chain; the beautiful Lalage, suspended by her hair, was beaten with rods for having invoked the name of Cynthia. At last, Propertius, besieged by his conscience and by the phantoms which troubled his sleep, erected a column and engraved an epitaph on the tomb of his dear mistress; he carried out, also, the last bequests of the unfortunate one by taking into his own house the old nurse and well-beloved slave of Cynthia; but in spite of high advices which came to him through the gate of dreams, he did not burn the verses which he had devoted to his amours. One night, the melancholy shade of Cynthia appeared to him and said: "Live for others now. Soon you shall be with me alone; you shall be with me, and our bones, mingled together, shall repose in the same tomb." At these words the plaintive shadow vanished in the embraces of the poet, who thought to seize it and lift it to the kingdom of the Manes. Propertius did not long survive her whom he never ceased to weep; he died at the age of forty years and was reunited to Cynthia in the tomb which he had reared for her on one of the pleasantest sites beside the cascades of the Tiber. Cynthia, who shares the immortality of her poet, was, however, nothing more than a famous courtezan.

## CHAPTER XXVI

THE love of courtezans constituted the whole life, the whole renown of a contemporary of Propertius. Tibullus loved and hymned his mistresses. Tibullus, friend of Virgil, of Horace and of Ovid, was, like them, a great poet and a tender lover. He was born at Rome forty-three years before the Christian era, the same day as Ovid. His taste for poetry revealed itself early and, from the age of seventeen years, he recognized the fact that he was not made to follow the career of arms, but that his temperament, rather, led him toward a career of pleasure. "It is there that I am a good chief and a good soldier!" he cried in one of his elegies. Indeed, the voluptuous life, which was his vocation, was not slow in exhausting his physical forces and in developing his nervous sensibility; he did not possess a constitution sufficiently energetic to resist for long the abuse of those pleasures which Roman corruption had brought to so monstrous a degree of perfection; in the midst of young debauchees, whose orgies he shared, he worried all the time over his physical inferiority, and he soon perceived his impotence. He then resolved to recover by means of his heart those pleasures which his debilitated nature was no longer capable of procuring for him. Up to that time he had scattered among a hundred mistresses all the activity of his vagabond passions; he concentrated them from now on upon a single woman. This woman could have been none other than a courtezan, for at Rome, the law and manners were opposed to any illegitimate love addressed to a woman of free condition which did not end in marriage. Tibullus was not concerned with marrying, and he was not in search of a secret and guilty liaison which he would have been obliged to hide even from the eyes of his friends. Quite the contrary, he wished to take the public as the witness and the confidant of his amorous occupations.

His choice first rested upon a courtezan whom he calls Delia in the first book of his elegies, but who must have had another name. According to the most probable opinion, she was a freed woman named Plania, whose complacent husband cleverly exploited her beauty and coquetry. Tibullus was not rich enough to be accepted or even tolerated by this avaricious husband, who had no jealousy except with regard to an unproductive infidelity. But the mother of Delia, indignant at the shameful servitude imposed on her daughter, took the part of Tibullus with his sweetheart, whom he loved but whom he did not pay. It was she who brought Delia to Tibullus, under cover of darkness, and who, fearful and silent, secretly joined their trembling hands; it was she who presided over their nocturnal rendezvous, who waited for the lover at the door and who recognized the distant sound of his steps. These rendezvous, it is true, may not have been very dangerous to the virtue of the wife and the honor of the husband; for Tibullus himself tells us that before he had won the heart of Delia he was no longer a man: "More than once," he says, "I took in my arms another beauty; but when I was about to taste happiness, Venus would remind me of my mistress and betray my fires; then this beauty would quit my couch, saying I was under the power of an evil spell, and she would publish, alas! my sad impotence." It is permissible to believe that Tibullus had undergone no change in becoming Delia's lover. That is why, no doubt, discontented with himself and worried over his own impotence, he suggests to the aged mother of Delia "that she teach her chastity (*sit modo casta doce*), even though the sacred fillet does not bind up her hair, even though the flowing robe does not hide her feet." It was, then, on the part of the poet a love that was more ideal than material, and the heart bore nearly all the expense. Nevertheless, the two lovers saw each other sometimes at night, unknown to the husband, and Tibullus, exalted by his wholly Platonic tenderness, would wait patiently at Delia's door, until this door, often enough mute and immobile, would turn furtively on its hinges, if the jealous spouse happened to be absent.

or asleep: "I feel nothing of the cold of a winter night," he said, after he had cursed that inexorable door, "nothing of the rain which falls in torrents; these rude tests find me insensible, provided Delia draws at last the latch and that the tacit signal of her finger calls me to her side."

This love possessed all the characteristics of other amours: jealousies, ruptures, reconciliations, tears and kisses; but the poet found great difficulty in accustoming himself to the trade of his mistress. He knew well enough, however, that he could not pay the price of her caresses and that he must close his eyes or break with her: "O you who sell your love to the first comer," he cried out with rage, "whoever you may be, may the funeral stone rest upon your bones!" He had no gold with which to satisfy the venality of Delia's infamous husband; he had recourse to philtres and enchantments, in the hope of repelling his rivals and forcing his mistress to be faithful to him, but enchantments and philtres availed him nothing: "I have done everything, everything," he wrote to Delia, "and it is another who possesses your love, another who enjoys and is happy in the fruit of my incantations!" Delia, fatigued with complaints and reproaches which she knew she deserved all too well, closed her door on the desolated poet. "Your door does not open," he remarked with bitterness, "it is a hand filled with gold which must knock there." In his despair he even went so far as to denounce his own love to the husband, who feigned ignorance of it, and he offered to aid the latter in guarding his wife, as a devoted slave might have done. Delia, who had been rendered astute by her vicious habits, merely laughed at the denunciations of Tibullus and maintained brazenly that she had never given him anything but pity. The husband pretended to believe her and imposed silence on her accuser; but the latter, stung to the quick and irritated at being given the lie, entered into the most circumstantial details on the subject of his liaison with the perfidious one: "Sometimes," he tells the sly husband, "in pretending to admire her pearls and her ring, I have, under this pretext, taken her hand; sometimes with a pure wine I have

poured sleep for you, while in my own more sober cup a furtive water was assuring me of victory!" The husband shrugged his shoulders and smiled without replying, as though to say: "What fools these poets are!" Tibullus, tormented by jealousy, then undertook to give advice to this deceived husband, who was happy in being such: "Take guard," he told him, "not to let the young fellows come too often; take care that, when she is reposing, a robe of ample folds does not leave her bosom uncovered; take care that her signals do not escape you, and that, with her damp finger, she does not trace amorous characters on the table!" Tibullus forgot that it was with himself that Delia had learned the art of deceiving her Argus; he himself had given her the secret of essences and herbs which would efface the livid imprint made by the tooth of a lover in the combats of Venus (*livor quem facit impresso mutua dente Venus*).

Tibullus had offended Delia too much for her to pardon his outrages; the break between them was definitive, and the husband found this to his liking, since his wife would no longer be distracted from other more lucrative loves. When Tibullus was convinced of the impossibility of a reconciliation, he did not obstinately persist in a vain pursuit, but proceeded to take his love elsewhere. It was once more a courtezan, more avid and more inflexible than Delia. Nevertheless, he put himself to the pains of writing poems for her; he flattered himself that he would be able to take this avaricious heart with the seductions of vanity; and so he burned his poetic incense at the feet of the disdainful beauty, whom he adored under the name of Nemesis. This courtezan was kept by a rich freedman, who had been sold many times in the slave market and who owed his riches to contemptible industries. She did not care for this parvenu, whom fortune had barely scoured clean; but she had no taste for loves which brought her nothing: "Alas!" cried Tibullus, sadly, "it is the rich, I see, who are pleasing to your beauty! Ah, well! Let robbery enrich me, since Venus loves opulence! Let Nemesis swim from now on in luxury and walk through the city, scatter-

ing me largess with her dazzling glances! Let her wear those transparent tissues which the hand of a woman of Cos has interwoven with threads of gold! Let her steps be followed by those black slaves, burned by the fiery sun of India! Let Africa and Tyre give her at will their most beautiful colors, Africa her scarlet and Tyre her purple!” These were but the projects of a poet, and Tibullus, after having pompously set them down in an elegy, did not hasten to put them into execution. He waited a year, a whole year, for the favors of this Nemesis, who undoubtedly made him pay for them in one manner or another, but who did not inspire in him the desire of demanding them and obtaining them a second time at the same price. He was on the point of disposing of the modest inheritance of his ancestors in order to satisfy the importunities of his new mistress; his friend, Cerinthus, prevented him from committing this folly; and he endeavored to restrain himself from paying in other than his own poet’s coin. As a result, he was disdainfully dismissed. “It is a vile procuress,” he wrote to his friends, Cerinthus and Macer, “who has placed obstacles in the path of my amours. Nemesis herself is good. It is the infamous Phryne who discards me without pity; she carries forward and back, in the secrecy of her bosom, furtive messages of love. Frequently, when I am vainly imploring from the threshhold, I recognize the voice of my mistress from within, and she tells me that Nemesis is absent; sometimes, when I am claiming a night which was promised me, she announces that my pretty one is suffering and frightened by a menacing omen. Then I die of worry; then my distracted imagination shows me a rival in the arms of Nemesis, and all the manners in which he varies his pleasure. Then, infamous Phryne, I vow you to the Eumenides!” His friends consoled him and gave him to understand that Rome was not lacking in courtezans who would be proud to be loved and sung by a poet like himself.

Soon we see Tibullus enamored of the young and chaste Neaera, who was not, probably, Horace’s Neaera. Tibullus, in the third book of his Elegies, which he has dedicated to her, pic-

tures her as an innocent child, reared by the tenderest of mothers and the most amiable of fathers. She must have been the daughter of freed man parents, and yet, Tibullus offers to marry her, or, at least, to take her as a concubine. Although gray hairs had not yet invaded his black locks, although old age with his bent back and halting step had not yet come to him, he felt that he was near his end: he was a lamp drained of oil, which was casting one last ray. The chaste Neaera, as he constantly calls her, refused to unite her fresh and ardent youth to this cold and ravaged one; she viewed with pleasure the attention of which she was the object on the part of the noble poet; she listened to his verses and his sighs; she demanded no other presents than the collection of Tibullus' Elegies, written on white vellum and bound in gold. But she was at the age of love; and so, she gave herself to another, without withdrawing her friendship from Tibullus, who had hoped for something better: "Faithful or constant," he said, "you shall be always my dear Neaera!" It was not without tears and struggles that he resigned himself, at last, to being nothing more than a brother to Neaera; he felt that he would die of chagrin, and he wanted these words to be engraved upon his tomb: "Grief and despair at being deprived of his Neaera have caused his end!" His friends, his ancient companions at table and in pleasure, the poets of love and courtezans, still drew him, by way of distraction, into their joyous assemblages; they invited him to sing the praises of Bacchus, who comes to aid the sufferings of lovers: "Oh! how sweet it would be to me," murmured Tibullus, emptying his glass, "to repose near you for long nights, to watch near you for long days! Faithless to the one who deserved her love, she has given it to one who is not worthy! Perfidious creature! . . . But even though perfidious, she is dear to me still!" Bacchus, who won him over by degrees, caused the phantom of Neaera to vanish: "Go, slave, go!" cried Tibullus, extending his goblet to the cupbearer: "let the wine roll in higher waves! It has been long since I anointed my head

with the perfumes of Syria and bound my forehead with coronals of flowers!"

Tibullus knew well enough that he could no longer expect of a mistress that gentle exchange of sentiments in which his imagination still dreamed to find happiness: "Youth and love," he remarked, regretting that he was still young and yet could be amorous no more, "youth and love, those are the true enchanters!" He no longer had recourse to magic and philtres in order to supply all that his devitalizing malady and languor had taken away; he endeavored to prove to Neaera that he was still capable of becoming a husband and even, at need, a lover; he made a declaration of love to Sulpicia, daughter of Servius, and he proceeded to sketch the portrait of his new-found divinity: "Grace composes in secret each of her gestures, each of her movements, and attaches to her every step. Does she undo her locks, one loves to see those vagabond tresses floating down; does she do them up artfully, that coiffure sets off her beauty. She inflames us when she goes wrapped in the mantle of Tyrian purple; she inflames us when she comes to us clad in a robe white as snow." Sulpicia took pity on the dying poet; she gave him more than he asked, and she it was who received the last gleams of that heart which was so soon to be extinguished: "No other woman," he cried with enthusiasm, "could steal me away from your couch! . . . It is the first condition which Venus sets for our liaison! Only you can please me, and other than you, there is not in Rome a woman who is beautiful in my eyes. . . . If Heaven should send Tibullus another sweetheart, she would send her in vain, and Venus herself would be without power!" But at the very hour in which the poet was uttering this oath of fidelity, he was unfaithful, and Glycera, one of the most delicious Greek courtesans there was in Rome, was endeavoring to win for herself a little share of immortality in the verses of Tibullus. The latter, astonished at the good fortune which he had not sought, thought he must owe it to his personal merits, and so, he set about to make serious love to Glycera, who loved only his elegies. Tibullus,

for the first time in his life, endeavored to make love like a lover and not like a poet; he did not compose a single line of verse for Glycera, who had not the patience to wait upon a poetic old age, and who soon turned her back upon the poor moribund poet. This cruelty profoundly affected Tibullus, whose frail health had been so altered that his friends realized he had been struck with death. Horace addressed to him a consoling ode, in which he begged him to forget the cruel Glycera (*ne doleas plus nimio memor immitis Glycerae*), and Tibullus learned, almost at once, that Horace had succeeded him in the good graces of that capricious lady. Tibullus did not recover from the blow; he succumbed, at last, at the age of twenty-four years; his mother and his sister had closed his eyes, and on the day of his funeral his two mistresses, Delia and Nemesis, were to be seen clad in mourning and giving evidence of the most lively grief; these two rivals followed the funeral cortége together and mingled their tears over the pyre of their lover, each claiming the glory of having been the better loved.

This epoch of the reign of Augustus marked the triumph of poets and courtezans, who understood each other so well that it seemed they were inseparable; wherever there was a courtezan, there was always an amorous poet, one at least to make love to her in his verses. The brilliant Glycera shared her vogue and her adorers with the charming Citheris, another Greek courtezan who might well have been the daughter of the one whom Julius Ceasar loved. Horace also had loved Citheris, in whom we are not to recognize the Citheris of Caesar or of Cornelius Gallus. This last, a friend of Tibullus of Ovid, and of Virgil, a poet like them, and, like them, much sought after in the society of courtezans, was attached to Citheris, whom he hymned under the name of Lycoris, celebrating his love in a poem of four stanzas, of which we now possess only passionate fragments: "What does that procress do," he cried indignantly, "when she endeavors to spoil my amours, and when she bears rich presents hidden in her bosom. She vaunts the young man who sends these presents; she

speaks of his noble character, of his fresh countenance, which no  
down yet shadows, of his blond locks which fall about his head  
in undulating ringlets, of his talent at playing the lyre and at  
singing! . . . Oh! how I tremble lest my mistress be unfaithful  
to me! . . . Woman is by nature changeful and mobile always;  
one never knows whether she loves or hates!"\* Gallus was ab-  
sent from Rome, the war having called him with the Roman  
eagles to distant provinces, and as he fought, he evoked the mem-  
ory of his beloved: "My Lycoris," he cried, "shall not be seduced  
by the fresh face of a young man, nor by his presents; the  
authority of a father and the rigorous commands of a mother  
shall endeavor in vain to make her forget me; her heart shall re-  
main unshaken in its love!" In this amorous frame of mind, it  
naturally occurred to him that the most glorious victory to be  
gained over the Parthians was not worth a night in the arms of  
his mistress: "What is the war to me!" he exclaimed with a  
sigh: "Let them fight, those who seek in the labors of Mars  
riches or conquests. As for us, we shall fight with other arms:  
it is love which sounds the clarion and which gives the signal for  
the mêlée; and as for me, if I do not do valiant battle from the  
rising to the setting of the sun, may Venus treat me like a coward  
and take away my arms! But if my vows are accomplished, and  
if things turn to my honor, let the woman who is dear to me be  
the reward of my triumph, let me press her to my bosom and  
cover her with kisses, so long as I feel the force to love and am  
not ashamed to do so! And then, let generous wines, mingled  
with nard and roses, come to inflame my ardor! Let my locks,  
crowned with flowers, be anointed with perfumes! Surely, I shall  
not blush to sleep in the arms of my mistress and not to leave the  
bed till the middle of the day!"

When Gallus came back from the Parthian war with a few  
wounds and a few gray hairs the more, he did not find his Lyco-  
ris as he had left her; she had not embroidered for him, as he had  
hoped, another cloak for his next campaign, for she would have

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\**Donna e mobile.*

had hard work picturing herself engaged in needlework, her eyes in tears and her face pale and despairing. She had taken new lovers; she did not even dream that Gallus would come back to her. The latter perceived that he was no longer living in the golden age when, as he himself had said, "Woman was sufficiently chaste when she knew enough to be silent in public regarding her own weaknesses." He did not burn the verses which he had made for Lycoris, and which were, indeed, in the memory of all lovers; but he answered infidelity with infidelity, and he found consolation in the class of courtezans. He wanted Lycoris to regret him, and by his loved elegies, he made a fashion of a number of young girls whose beauty had not yet made them famous. There were, first of all, two sisters, Gentia and Chloe, whom he possessed at one and the same time: "Do not quarrel," he said to them, to bring harmony between them, "do not quarrel over which of you two has the whiter skin; quarrel only over this point: which embraces her lover more, the one with her eyes, the other with her hair?" The locks of Gentia were blond as gold; the eyes of Chloe contained a thousand gleams; finally, Gallus fell in love with a beautiful and naïve child named Lydia, to whom he became an amorous preceptor: "Show, young girl," he said to her, with admiration, "show your blond locks, which shine like purest gold; show, young girl, your white neck, which rises gracefully above your white shoulders; show, young girl, your starry eyes, under the arch of your black brows; show, young girl, those rosy cheeks where glows, sometimes, the purple of fire; give me your lips, your lips of coral; give me the gentle kisses of the dove! Ah! you suck away a part of my drunken soul, and your kisses penetrate to the bottom of my heart! Do you not aspire to my blood and my life? Hide those apples of love, hide those buds which distill milk under my hand! Your bare throat exhales an odor of myrrh; there is nothing but delight in all your person! Hide, then, that breast which slays me with its beauteous splendor of snow! Cruel one, do you not see that I am swooning? I am half dead, and you abandon me!" Gallus

provided in his verses no rival to this Lycoris, whom he had hymned so amorously and whose name remained a favorite one among the women of pleasure. More than four centuries later, another Lycoris inspired the muse of a poet, Maximianus, who deserves to be confused with Cornelius Gallus, just as his Lycoris was confused with the one whom Gallus loved and hymned. But this Maximianus, the ambassador of Theodoric, as he had been, was but an impotent old man, who complained of having been the plaything of his mistress, and who took refuge in the distant memories of his youth in order to warm his heart again and to appear less ridiculous in his own eyes: "There she is, that beautiful Lycoris, whom I have loved too well," lamented the poet, "she to whom I gave my heart and my fortune! After all these years which we have spent together, she repells my caresses! She is astonished, alas! Already, she is seeking young fellows and other loves; she calls me a weak and decrepit old man, without remembering the pleasures of the past, without recalling it is she herself who has made an old man of me!"

A friend of the true Gallus, an appreciator of the charms of the true Lycoris, and a great poet, also devoted the first inspirations of his muse to love. One might say that Ovid, the precentor and legislator of the art of love, had learned his trade in commerce with courtezans. Ovid belonged to the Naso family; prominence of the nose was the distinctive character and the erotic attribute of the males of this family. The name of *Naso* was handed down by them from father to son, along with that terrible nose which had been the celebrity of one of their ancestors. In this respect, as in all others, this last of the line had not degenerated. He was a voluptuary, who early began to live according to his tastes: "My days," he himself said, in recalling the origin of his poetic surname, "my days flowed away in idleness; the couch and leisure had already enervated my soul, when the desire to make myself pleasing to a young beauty put an end to my disgraceful apathy!" This young beauty was not, as some have, without basis, supposed, the daughter of Augustus, Julia, widow

of Marcellus and wife of Marcus Agrippa; she was, evidently, a simple courtezan, whom he has sung under the name of Corinne. Corinne—it is Ovid himself who tells us—had a husband, or rather, a lenon (*lenone marito*); this husband, like those of all the courtezans, derived an indecent revenue from the gallantries of his wife. Ovid, who was no richer than poets always are, was undoubtedly pleasing enough to the wife, but he was quite sure of being displeasing to the husband. This situation with regard to Corinne was, then, that of Tibullus with Delia and with Nemesis; only, his reputation as a poet had given him a start over the others, and as a consequence, the courtezans who wished to become famous disputed the favor of his love and his verses. We may believe that he provided Corinne with numerous rivals; but he did not keep the vows he made to any of the rest, since Corinne alone was named in those elegies which she undoubtedly had not been the only one to inspire. We must never forget, in order to explain this singularity, that Ovid had composed five books of elegies, and had burned two of them, correcting the ones which he permitted to remain. However this may be, we have never known positively who was this mysterious Corinne, and the secret was so well guarded in Ovid's day that his friends in vain besought him for a revelation, while more than one courtezan, profiting by the discretion of Corinne's lover, usurped the nickname of this fair unknown and passed herself off publicly as the heroine of the poet's songs. According to one opinion which is not the least unlikely, Corinne was but the imaginative personification of a number of courtezans whom Ovid had loved, at once or in succession.

If we are to follow Ovid's own story, love already had marvelously disposed him to receive the impression which his heart took on meeting Corinne: "Who could ask me," he demands, "why my couch appears to me so hard? Why the coverings do not remain on my bed? Why during the night, which appeared to me so long, I did not taste sleep? Why my fatigued members are always tossing under the prick of lively griefs?" He had

seen Corinne, he loved her, he desired her. He must have met her in one of those comedies, where good cheer, wine, perfumes, music and the dance favored communications of the heart and weakness of the senses. But the husband, or the lover of Corinne, must also have accompanied her, and jealousy was awakened in Ovid before the possession of his loved one had given him the right to be jealous of her. He wrote to her then to give her tender instructions on the conduct which she should observe during supper; he taught her a number of little love tricks which she, it may be, knew better than he: "When your husband shall be couched at table, you shall come with a modest air and take your place at his side, and then let your foot secretly touch my own." He begs her to pass him the goblet from which she has drunk, in order that he may put his lips to the very place which her own have touched: "Do not permit your husband," he tells her, "to throw his arms about your neck; do not rest on his hairy bosom your charming head; do not permit him to put his hand on your throat and profane your breast; above all, see that you give him no kiss, for if you give him a single one, I shall not be able to conceal the fact that I love you. 'Those kisses are mine!' I should cry out, and then, I should come and take them. Those kisses, at least, I can see; but caresses which are hidden under the cloth (*quae bene pallia celant*), those are the ones that arouse my blind jealousy. Do not rub your thigh against his, do not join your leg to his nor mingle with his gross feet your delicate little ones." But the poor lover, who creates for himself as many torments as he does previsions, grows sorrowful and indignant at the liberties which the husband, heated by wine, might be able to take in his presence and without his knowing it, without his daring to breathe a word: "To spare me all suspicion," he says to the beauty, "remove that cloth which might be the accomplice to what I apprehend, since I myself have tried it twenty times with my mistresses."

*Saepe mihi dominiaeque meae properata voluptas  
Veste sub injecta dulce peregit opus.  
Hoc tu non facies; sed ne fecisse puteris,  
Conscia de gremio pallia deme tuo.*

Ovid hoped to profit, in the interest of his love, by the drunken sleep of this husband, who was always spying on him; but suddenly, he became conscious of the futility of so many refined precautions; when the meal was over, the husband would lead his wife away and be the master of her; he might do what he pleased with her, without constraint and with no one to witness: "At least do not give yourself to him without regret," he cries dolorously, and as though yielding to the violence of his own emotions; "let your caresses be mute, and may Venus be bitter to him!" But the very next day, Corinne fancied that she had a bone to pick with the one who gave her all this advice; and so, she went to his house at the hour when, stretched on his couch, he was taking his repose in the heat of the day: "And along came Corinne, her tunic up and her hair floating over her alabaster neck. Thus did Semiramis walk, they tell us, toward the nuptial couch; thus did Lais, celebrated for her numerous lovers. I tore off a vestment, which, however, hid nothing of her charms; she resisted all the while and wished to keep her tunic; but since her resistance was that of a woman who does not care to conquer, she soon consented without regret to be vanquished. When she appeared before my eyes without any veil, I did not remark in all her body the least imperfection! What shoulders, what arms did I see and touch! What an admirable throat it was given me to press! Under that irreproachable bosom, what a white and polished belly! What large flanks, what a juvenile rump! But why pause over each detail? I saw nothing which was not worthy of praise, and I held her, nude, pressed against my body. Who does not divine the rest? We both fell asleep from fatigue. If I might only often have such middays as that!"

He possesses his mistress, but he is not yet happy; he is jeal-

ous; he has rivals who pay dearly for a happiness for which he himself cannot pay; he quarrels, insults and mistrusts Corinne; he strikes her! "Fury made me raise against her temerarious hand," he says, detesting himself. "She weeps now, she whom I have wounded in my delirium!" He never forgave himself for this brutality. "I have had the fearful courage to pull her hair down over her forehead," he himself tells us, "and my pitiless nails have furrowed her childish cheeks. I have seen her pale, on the verge of fainting, her face discolored and like marble which the chisel carves from the mountains of Paros; I have seen her features lifeless and her members trembling like the leaf of the poplar agitated by the wind, like the feeble bird which bends under the gentle breath of the zephyr; like the wave when the breath of Notus rides the surface; her tears, held in for long, flow down her cheeks like water from the snows of mountains!" Corinne frequently kept by her side an old procuress named Dipsas, who employed all sorts of artifices to bring about a break between her and Ovid, at least to get rid of the latter and to sell to richer lovers the moments thus stolen from him: "Tell me," demanded Dipsas with a sneer, "what does your poet give you besides a few verses? Ah! you shall have thousands to read; the god of verses himself, covered with a splendid golden mantle, shall strike the harmonious chords of a gilded lyre; what he will give you in gold, shall it not be in your eyes greater than the great Homer himself? Believe me, it is a good thing to give." Ovid heard of the perfidious suggestions of this hideous old woman and he could scarcely restrain himself from laying hands on her few white hairs, her eyes weeping with wine, and her cheeks rid-dled with wrinkles; he contented himself with cursing her in these terms: "May the gods refuse you asylum, may they send you an unhappy old age, winters without end and an eternal thirst!" The poet had need of all his eloquence, and especially of all his tenderness, in order to combat the detestable influence of Dipsas, who labored to pervert still further the naïve Corinne: "Do not ask of a poor man anything except his care, his services, and

his fidelity!" he wrote to his mistress, whom he had left in a pensive mood. "A lover can only give what he possesses. To celebrate in my verses the beautiful ones whom I believe worthy of them, that is the only fortune I possess; to her whom I choose my art shall give a name which shall never die; precious stuffs shall be torn, gold and precious stones shall be broken, but the renown which my verses procure shall be eternal!"\* This consideration was not an indifferent one in the eyes of Corinne, who was proud of being pointed out, on the promenades, in the theatre, at the Circus, as the muse of Ovid.

Her husband had placed at her side a eunuch named Bagoas, who accompanied her everywhere, and who never permitted her to be seduced without first having consulted his master; Ovid could not succeed in putting this Cerberus to sleep, but he had won over Corinne's two hairdressers, Nape, who delivered his letters, and Cypassis, who introduced him into hiding. This latter was pretty and well-built; one day, Ovid took a good look at her while he was waiting for his mistress, and he whiled away the time by permitting himself everything which Cypassis would permit him. Corinne, on her return, noticed a certain suspicious disorder in the sleeping chamber; the blushes of Cypassis appeared to confirm her suspicions, which the countenance of Ovid did not belie: "You suspect her of having stained with me the bed of her mistress!" he cried, forcing himself to lay hold of his assurance. "May the gods, if such a desire ever comes to me, preserve me from carrying it out with a woman of desppicable condition! Who is the freeman who would want to have knowledge of a slave, and who would take in his arms a body furrowed with the blows of the whip!" He had little difficulty in persuading Corinne, and that evening, he wrote to Cypassis to demand of her a new rendezvous. Corinne, it is true, was not bored on her side, and more than once her lover judged that she knew more than he had taught her: "Such lessons as those are given only in bed (*illa nisi in lecto nusquam potuere doceri*)," he murmured,

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\*The *exegi monumentum* theme.

as he tasted a kiss which seemed strange to him. "Some other master has received the inestimable price of those lessons!" Corinne kept him at a distance under different pretexts having to do with religion, the state of her health and her humor. Ovid sought the cause of this strangeness in a new gallantry, and he spent the time patiently with a number of chamber-maids who were not less beautiful than their mistress, but with whom the heart was not a matter of concern. Suddenly, he learned from these girls that Corinne had had an abortion and that this abortion had endangered her life; Ovid became indignant at the odious deed she had committed on herself: "She who first endeavored to remove from her flanks the tender fruit they bore," he said to her severely, "she deserved to perish as a victim of her own arms. What! just because you fear your belly may be spoiled by a few wrinkles, must you ravage the sorrowful field of amorous combats!" After this event, Corinne redoubled her concern and tenderness for her poet; she was never with him often or long enough; the eunuch Bagoas closed his eyes or turned aside his head; the husband did not show himself; the dogs no longer barked; and so they sent for the absent Ovid and almost dragged him there; they left him nothing to ask for, still less to desire. He tired of being thus monopolized by his mistress: "Tranquil and too facile amours become insipid to me," he says harshly; "they are for my heart a food that is too stale. If a bronze tower had never enclosed Danae, Jupiter would never have made her a mother." Corinne was sufficiently astonished at such capricious and brutal languor; she did not possess the strength to reply, but wept in silence: "What need have I," Ovid said to her, with still more severity, "what need have I of a complacent husband, a husband who is a lenon?" Corinne understood that he no longer loved her.

Indeed, she soon had irrefutable proof of Ovid's frigidity: for one night, for one whole night, he remained dead and frozen under the kisses which she prodigally lavished on him. Ovid was, himself, surprised at this sudden incapacity: "But re-

cently," he said to her, "I twice had acquitted my debt with the white Childis, thrice with the white Pytho, thrice with Libas, and, to satisfy the exigencies of Corinne, I have been able, as I recall, to make nine assaults in the space of one brief night (*me memini numeros sustinuisse novem*)."<sup>1</sup> But the more Ovid looked into himself, the less he was capable of finding himself: "Why do you make sport of me?" cried Corinne, red with shame and contempt. "Why do you force yourself, poor fool, to come in spite of yourself and lie on my couch? Some magician of Ea must have charmed you with a knot of wool; or else, you have just come exhausted from the arms of another (*aut alio lassus amore venis*)!" At these words, she leaped out of the bed, snatching up her tunic, and fled with naked feet; in order to hide from her women the affront which she had received from her lover, she did not forego her ablutions (*dedecus hoc sumptâ dissimulavit aquâ*), and she took refuge in a distant bedroom, as in a fort. Ovid did not feel that he was in a condition to retrieve his shameful defeat, and so, he retired without daring to reappear upon the field of battle. As soon as he had gone, Corinne ordered that he was not to be received any more; and the following day, the door was closed to him; he wept and insisted; he addressed suppliant verses to the invisible Corinne; the response brought back to him was that from then on, in place of verses, he would be asked for sounding coins. He began wandering around the house of the courtezan, and a hairdresser came to inform him that, that very morning, Corinne had received a Roman captain who had just returned from the wars in Asia, laden with wounds and booty. In spite of all this, Ovid, who was piqued at seeing himself thus superseded by a newcomer, stubbornly insisted on beating the door which was closed to him. The eunuch Bagoas came to open it and threatened to call the dog which guarded the place. Ovid cursed soldiers who were rich in gold and women who preferred robust soldiers to poor and debilitated poets; he consigned women and soldiers to the gods of vengeance; he compared, then, with the true age of gold, when love was not sold,

this age of iron in which everything, even love, was bought with gold: “Today,” he complained bitterly, “a woman, if she had the pride of the Sabines, would obey like a slave the one who had much to give her. Her guardian forbids you to approach her; she fears on my account the wrath of her husband; but if I cared to give gold, spouse and eunuch would give me the freedom of the house. Ah! If there is a god who avenges disdained lovers, may he change into dust treasures so ill-acquired!”

Ovid was not yet cured of his love: this resistance, on the contrary, merely increased it. He passed nights couched on the threshold of Corinne’s door; he groaned; he repeated her name with tears, with sighs and with prayers; he was more than once consoled by the beautiful Cypassis, who came to keep him warm and to bring him something to drink. But she was not the one who made him forget Corinne, and the poet was bent on dying in front of this inflexible door. One morning, before dawn, the door opened gently and a man came out. “What!” cried the discomfited lover. “What! Must I, while you are pressing some lover in your arms, must I, like a slave, be the guardian of a door which is closed to me! I have seen him, that lover, coming out of your house, fatigued and with halting step, like that of an artisan tired with labor; but I suffered less at seeing him than at being seen myself!” Ovid believed that he was free of a love which seemed to him, from then on, a disgrace; but he could not forget Corinne, Corinne the unfaithful, Corinne given over to venal caresses, Corinne sold and merchandised like a meretrice at a street corner!

He left Rome in order to seek forgetfulness in absence; he retired to the country of the Falisci, where his wife had been born, and he waited there till the echoes of his heart should be silent; but the name of Corinne came to him from the air of the fields. He came back to Rome and found himself, more amorous than ever, in front of Corinne’s door. His friends came to meet him; they joined him, surrounded him, and informed him that Corinne had become a shameless courtezan, and that she had descended, more and more every day, the ladder of vice and public

contempt. She was to be seen everywhere with her gallants; she wore indecent costumes, in the street and at the theatre: she gave and received kisses in the sight of everybody and under the eyes of a dishonored husband; her hair was often in disorder, her neck bore the print of bites; her white arms were bruised; many tales were told of her immodesty, her avarice and her affrontery. Ovid refused to believe what he heard; and then they showed him the degradation into which his mistress had fallen. He wrote her one last time: "I do not pretend, austere censor, that you are chaste and modest; but all I ask of myself is that I may go on deceiving myself as to the truth. She is not guilty who can deny the fault that is imputed to her; it is only the confession she makes that renders her infamous. What madness to reveal to the light of day the mysteries of the night, and to speak openly of what one does in secret! Before giving herself to the first comer, the meretrix at least puts a door between herself and the public; while you, you publish everywhere the opprobrium with which you are covered and you yourself proclaim your own shameful faults!" But Corinne was lost, to herself as to Ovid; she walked with great strides in the lowest paths of Prostitution.

Ovid never effaced the name of Corinne from the verses which he had dedicated to her; under this name he had loved her, under this name he had sung of her: "Seek a new poet, goddess of loves!" he cried, in putting his hand for the last time to his book of elegies. If he still had mistresses, he no longer sang of any, because none longer inspired him with love. He lived more than ever in the intimacy of courtezans, and, by way of recompensing them for the pleasure which they procured for him, he composed, under their eyes and by their inspiration, his poem the *Ars Amoris*, that code of love and sensual pleasure. In his numerous poems, he gave, always, a large place to his amorous reminiscences, but he never confessed a single one of these mistresses by naming her in the verses composed in her honor; which gives ground for supposing that he had a secret liaison with the daughter of the Emperor, and that he was content with his happiness

without divulging it. His exile was attributed to this passion for adultery, which Augustus did not dare to punish otherwise; according to other reports current at Rome, Ovid had surprised Augustus committing incest with his own daughter. However this may be, Ovid, the tender Ovid, exiled on the banks of the Euxine Sea, died of grief among barbarians after having endeavored to destroy all his works, even the elegies of his loves; he came to learn, through letters from Rome, that Corinne, old and wrinkled, clad in a torn and faded tunic, had become a servant in a wine shop where boatmen of the Tiber went to commit their debaucheries: "It would have been better if she had become a magician or a perfumer!" he thought, stupefied. He gave up his soul by pressing to his cold lips a ring which contained locks of Corinne's hair.



## CHAPTER XXVII

FTER Ovid, we must go to Martial in order to pick up in a manner the interrupted thread of our narrative, the portion dealing with the courtezans of Rome; for more than half a century, poetry was silent on their account, and we may presume that they were not merely waiting for Martial to speak for them, but that, if erotic poets were lacking to establish the deeds and gestures of famosae during this period, the fault is not due to any arrest in the progress of ancient Prostitution. Far from that, the successors of Augustus had taken it upon themselves to demoralize Roman society, and they immodestly afforded an example of all the refinements of debauchery; public manners were then so profoundly altered that, among the poets, not one might have been found who would incur the ridicule of chanting the epic of his amours, as Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid had done. In the same manner, one would not have found a courtezan who would abandon her youth to furnish subjects for elegies to an amorous and jealous poet. Jealousy, like love, appeared to be *passé*, and the pace of life was too swift to devote entire years to a single passion, rendered almost respectable by the length of its duration and partaking, so to speak, of the nature of matrimonial concubinage. When Marcus Valerius Martialis, born at Bilbilis in Spain about the year 43 of the Christian era, came to Rome at the age of seventeen to seek his fortune, he did not set about imitating the poets of love who had found a Meceanas to succor them in the century of Augustus. He became, on the contrary, the poetic accomplice of those libertinisms which characterized the reign of Nero and of the emperors who succeeded one another so rapidly down to Trajan. Martial owed his literary successes to the very obscenity of his epigrams.

He appears to have taken for models the shameless epigrams

of Catullus, who, at least, had written them with a sort of gross naïveté; Martial, on the contrary, in order to please the debauchees of the imperial court, endeavored to improve, in point of license, upon the most brazen poems of his time; he even undertook the monstrous quest of lubricity, and he did not even put a veil of decent expression over his unclean images. The applause which he received on all sides was his excuse and his encouragement; each new book of his epigrams, sought after and impatiently awaited by all the readers who knew by heart his preceding books, were infinitely multiplied in the hands of librarians, and the scribes who prepared copies, richly adorned and bound, were not able to meet the demands of purchasers. This enthusiastic reception accorded to these licentious verses undoubtedly was not intended to lead Martial to change his manner or tone of writing, and when an austere censor advised him to impose a little reserve on his words, if not on his ideas, he would not accept advice any more than he would reproach, and he had a thousand reasons at hand to prove to his critics that he had done well in properly composing the indecent verses which they would have expurgated from his works: "You complain, Cornelius," he said to one of his censors, "that my verses are not sufficiently severe and that a master would not want to read them in his school; but these little works cannot please the public any more than husbands can please their wives, if they possess no mentula . . . Such is the condition imposed on joyful poems; they are not fitting if they do not titillate the senses. Lay aside, then, your severity and pardon my jests and jocosities, I pray you. Give up chastising my books; nothing is more contemptible than Priapus become a priest of Cybele."

Martial had, on his side, the suffrages of emperors and libertines; he took little heed of what those of good taste had to say; and he was satisfied with the irresistible vogue of his ordure-laden epigrams, which, in passing through the mouths of courtesans and gitons, came gradually to the ears of the populace in the street. Hence, that brilliant renown which the poet had acquired

with his obscenities, which did not excuse the full-handed malice which he knew how to dispense in them; a renown which eclipsed that of Virgil and Horace, and which equalled the satiric triumph of Juvenal. As a matter of fact, all the scandalous chronicles of Rome were set down, so to speak, in a multitude of little pieces, easy to remember and easy to circulate; in these fragments of verse the poet had engraved, under transparent pseudonyms, the names of persons whom he turned to ridicule, or whom he branded with a red iron. He well might declare that he made no abuse of true names, and that he always respected personalities in his pleasantries; this did not restrain him from grave insults which he permitted himself with regard to a throng of people whom all the world recognized in his portraits, where they were not named, it is true, but painted with a hideous verity. He did not run the risk, it is equally true, of defaming honorable names and of pursuing with calumnies the private lives of citizens. The ordinary victims of his sarcasms were always knavish poets, insolent courtezans, vile prostitutes, criminal lenons, prodigals and misers, damaged men and lost women. He speaks, often, the language of the ignoble characters whom he places on his stage and, as it were, in the pillory; he is careful to forewarn his readers that they will not find in him either reserve or prudery of expression: “The epigrams,” he says, “are made for the frequenters of the floral games. Let Cato not enter our theater, or, if he does come there, let him look with the rest!”

Martial certainly frequented a low society which he has depicted in such blighting colors; he lets us see, in two or three passages, that his own manners were not much better regulated than those which he condemns in others; for he did not confine himself to making a show of his amours among the courtezans; he gave himself, sometimes, to vices not excused by the general corruption of his times, and which he is forced to justify by way of response to the bitter reproaches of his wife, Clodia Marcella. And yet, despite his penchant for debauches against nature, he pretended, in more than one epigram, to trumpet the uprightness

and purity of his life. He judged it favorably from the comparison which he made, to his own advantage, of his private manners with those of his contemporaries, above all, with those of the emperors to whom he dedicated his books; "My verses are free," he says to Domitian, "but my life is irreproachable (*Lasciva est nobis pagina, vita broba est.*)". To explain this apparent contradiction, it is sufficient, perhaps, to date the pieces in which Martial vaunts his morality and those in which he holds it so cheap: the first belong to his youth, the second to his old age. We should not forget that the first eleven books of his collection represent an interval of thirty-five years, which he passed, almost without interruption, at Rome. Martial, at twenty-five, may have lived chastely, merely caressing, in his verses, the sensuality of his protectors; at fifty, he had become a libertine, from having witnessed the libertinism of his friends; and it has been remarked, indeed, that, in the last books of his epigrams, he no longer pretends to a reputation for chastity which his licentious writings had lost for him a long time before. It is in the eleventh book that he had the immodesty to insert that abominable epigram addressed to his wife, who had surprised him with his mignon, and who wanted to sacrifice herself in order to be rid of his infamous tastes: "How many times has Juno made the same reproach to Jupiter?" replied Martial, laughing, and he proceeded to find authorization in the example of gods and heroes for persisting in his guilty habits and for repelling the sullen compliances of his wife:

*Parace tuis igitur dare mascula nomina rebus;  
Teque, puta cunnos, uxor, habere duos.*

The poet, it is true, had no illusion as to the character of his collection, and he knew well enough for what sort of readers he was composing his poems, which were always free and often obscene. "No page of my book is chaste," he tells us frankly, "and it is the young who read me; it is women of easy manners and the

old man who pesters his mistress.” He then compares himself to his imitator Cosconius, who like himself, made epigrams, but epigrams so chaste that one never saw in them a single immodest cloud (*inque suis nulla est mentula carminibus*). He praises this chastity, but he assures the other that such prudish writings can be destined only for children and virgins. He is not concerned then with imitating Cosconius, and he mocks the venerable matrons who read his work in secret and who then reproach him with not having written them for decent women: “I have written them for myself,” he tells them with no reticence. “The gymnasium, the hot baths, the stadium are on this side; retire then! We are undressed: are you afraid of looking on men naked? Here, crowned with roses, after she has drunk her fill, Terpsichore advocates modesty and, in her drunkenness, no longer knows what she is saying; she names, without circumlocution and frankly, what Venus receives in her Temple in the month of August, what the villager places on guard in the middle of his garden; what the chaste virgin does not look at except by placing her hand in front of her eyes.” We are warned, by this epigram, that the verses of Martial are not in quest of matrons as their ordinary readers, and that, in order to take pleasure in this profligacy of ideas and expression, one must have lived the life of libertines and their amiable accomplices. The complete collection of the poet of the comissions figured in the library of all the voluptuaries, and since it was of a format which permitted being held in the hand, it was read everywhere, at the baths, in the litter, at table, in bed. The bookseller who sold it at a very low price was named Secundus, a freed man of the learned Lucensis, who dwelt in the rear of the Temple of Peace and the market of Pallas; this bookseller also sold all the lubricious books, those of Catullus, those of Pedo, of Marsus, and of Getulicus, which were not less sought after by the young and old debauchees, but which the courtesans affected not to esteem so highly as they did the elegies of Tibullus, of Propertius and of Ovid. In all times, women, even the most depraved, have been sensitive to the paint-

ing of a tender and delicate love. Martial, however, offered his readers a contemporary interest which no poet had been able to give his verses; his poems were, so to speak, a gallery of portraits, so lifelike that the models had only to show themselves in order to be at once recognized, and so maliciously retouched that the vice or the ridiculous features of the original passed into a proverb along with the name which the poet had attached to his epigram. Among these portarits, which are rarely flattering, we shall choose those of the courtezans whom Martial enjoyed painting, sometimes on a number of occasions and at different periods, as though the better to judge of the changes which age and fate had brought into the lives or the persons of his characters; we shall lay aside, with disgust, the majority of the portraits of cinaedes and of gitons, whom Roman prostitution placed on the same footing with women of pleasure, and whom Martial displayed no scruple in treating likewise in his erotic and sotadic collection.

Here is Lesbia; she is not Catullus' Lesbia; she has no pet sparrow whose death she weeps, but she has lovers, and all the world knows it, because she opens her window and draws her curtains when she is with them; she loves publicity; secret pleasures are savorless for her (*nec sunt tibi grata gaudia si qua latent*); thus her door is never closed nor guarded when she abandons herself to her lubricity; she wants all Rome to have eyes upon her at that moment, and she is not troubled nor put out if someone enters, for a witness to her debauch gives her more pleasure than her lover does; she has no greater happiness than to be caught in the act (*deprehendi veto te, Lesbia, non futuiz*). "Take at least lessons in modesty from Chione and from Helide!" cries the indignant Martial to her. Chione and Helide were a pair of wandering she-wolves who hid their infamies in the shadow of the tombs. This Lesbia, as she grew old, fell into the last stages of prostitution, and she devoted herself more particularly to the turpitudes of the *ars fellationis* (Book II, Epigram 50). She had become ugly, and she was astonished, despite

the advice of her mirror, that her lovers of former days did not preserve for her their old desires and ardor. She blamed, on this score, the frigid sloth of Martial, who ended by telling her, by way of excusing his own obstinate impotence: "Your face is your cruellest enemy" (*contra te facies imperiosa tua est*). A long time afterward, reduced in her abandonment to feeding on her memories, Lesbia recalled with pride the numerous adorers which she had had; she enumerated them, their names, their ranks, their characteristics and their faces, before the areopagus of aged procuresses, who listened to her mockingly: "I have never given my favors gratis!" she said proudly (*Lesbia sejurat gratis nunquam esse fututam*) and while she was speaking thus of the past, the porters, whom she employed now in a different role, would beat at her door to know which of them would be paid that night.

Here is Chloe; not the Chloe of Horace; she is not even concerned with recalling the graces of her celebrated namesake; she is no longer young, but she is always gallant; she consoles herself, like Lesbia, at being no longer sought after by giving herself pleasure in return for her silver. She can do no less to accustom herself to the disdain which meets her everywhere, but she still keeps up the pretense of being paid for her favors. Martial says to her harshly: "I may pass over your face and your neck and your hands and your legs and your breasts and your *nates*; in short, not to fatigue myself with describing what I may pass over, Chloe, I may pass over your whole person." But Chloe was rich, and in her turn, she might overlook the price of these gallantries; she even stood the expense herself with a generosity that was rare enough with women of her sort. She was greatly taken with a young lad who had no other fortune than his beauty and his fine shoulders. Martial named him Lupercus by allusion to those priests of Pan who ran utterly naked about the streets of Rome at the feast of the Lupercalia, and who rendered fecund all the women whom they touched with their thongs of goatskin. The Lupercus of Chloe was as naked and as poor as a lupercal

priest, and Chloe despoiled herself in order to clothe and adorn him; she presented him with precious stuffs of Tyre and Spain, with a cloak of scarlet, a toga of the wool of Tarentum, sardonyxes of India, emeralds of Scythia, and a hundred pieces of gold newly struck. She could refuse nothing to this avid and needy lover, who was incessantly making demands upon her. "Woe to you, shorn ewe!" cried Martial. "Woe to you, poor old girl! Your Lupercus will leave you wholly naked!" The prediction was not realized. Chloe had gained enough in her own good time to be able to spare for her lovers a part of the gold which she had received; she was not niggardly with them; but since she paid them in place of being paid by them, she was more difficult to please. She devoured like a larva the youth and health of her pensioners; she had seven of them, who died one after another, and all from the same cause; she erected very respectable tombs for them, with an inscription in which she stated naïvely: "It is Chloe who built these tombs." They never called her after that anything but the *Woman Who Weeps for Seven Husbands*.

Martial, it must be confessed, was not always impartial in his epigrams; thus, the insults which he addresses to the courtesan, Thais, spring only from an excess of personal resentment; he there accuses Thais of refusing no one and of giving herself to every comer, as though this were the simplest thing in the world (Book IV, Epigram 12), and again, he reproves Thais for refusing him by saying that he was too old for her (Book IV, Epigram 50). Thais undoubtedly did not care to be a party to the ignominious test which he proposes as a proof of his virility, for he revenged himself on her by the most hideous portrait which was ever made of a woman: "Thais smells worse than the old barrel of an avaricious fuller, which is broken in the street; she smells worse than a goat that is making love; worse than the chops of a lion; worse than the skin of a dog flayed alive in the suburbs beyond the Tiber; worse than a foetus, putrifying in an egg, spawned before its turn; worse than an amphora, infected

with corrupt fish. In order to neutralize this odor with another, each time that Thais lays off her clothing to go to the bath, she sprinkles herself with psilotrum or covers herself with chalk, diluted in an acid, or rubs herself three or four times with a pomade made of fat livers. But when she thinks she has been freed from her stench by a thousand artifices of the toilet, when she has done everything, Thais smells always like—Thais (*Thaida Thais olet*).” This horrible picture is less repulsive than that which concerns Phlenis, against whom Martial undoubtedly had other grudges graver and more real. Phlenis, moreover, was not of an age to inspire a caprice, since the poet has her die at an age almost as advanced as that of the sybil of Culiae. She had a husband, or rather a companion in concubinge, named Diodorus, who appears to have distinguished himself in some distant expedition, and who, on returning to Rome, where triumphal honors were awaiting him, was shipwrecked in the Grecian sea; he succeeded in saving himself by swimming, and Martial attributes this unheard-of fortune to an indecent vow on the part of Phlenis, who, in order to obtain from the gods the return of her Diodorus had promised to Venus a simple and candid girl like those the chaste Sabines love (*quam castae quoque diligunt Sabinae*). This Phlenis, a sort of virago, who prided herself on being half a man, had an unbridled passion for women. “She goes into such transports,” says Martial, “that she devours in one day eleven young girls, without counting the young boys.” Her robe drawn back, she played at rackets, and, her limbs rubbed with yellow powder, she would hurl the heavy leaden disci like the athletes; she would contend with them, and, all soiled with mud, she would receive like them the lashes of the master of the Jalestra. She never supped, she never sat down at table without having first consumed seven measures of wine, and she thought she had a right to as many more, after she had eaten six ithyphallic loaves. She gave herself to the filthiest pleasures, under pretext of playing the man to the limit (*Non fellat: Putat hoc parum virile; sed plane medias vorat pueras*).

Nevertheless, this abominable gladiatrix was at once a magician and a procuress; she possessed a stentorian voice, and she made more noise by herself than a thousand slaves put up for sale or a flock of cranes on the banks of the Strymon: "Ah! what a tongue is reduced to silence!" cried Martial, when she had been relieved by death of her gymnastic exercises, of her debaucheries and of her infamous trade. "May the earth rest lightly upon you!" reads the epitaph which the poet composed for her: "may a thin couch of sand cover you so that the dogs may be able to get at your bones!"

Philenis probably had interfered with Martial in his amours; for after reading the portrait which he drew of her, one could not suppose that he had ever looked upon her in a better light; but one may be assured that he had not always been so disdainful toward Galla, whom he did not care so much for any more; after having insulted her bitterly, after having mocked her decrepitude and her forlornness, he lets himself go in a confession which bears witness to the injustice of his treatment of this courtezan. He tells us that she formerly had demanded 20,000 sesterces (about 5,000 francs) for one night "and this was not too much," as though he took pleasure in recalling the fact. At the end of a year, she did not ask more than 10,000 sesterces: "It is dearer than it was the first time!" thought Martial, who did not conclude the bargain. Six months later, she had fallen to 2,000 sesterces; Martial offered her but a thousand, which she did not accept; but a few months later, she herself came to offer herself for four pieces of gold; Martial in his turn refused. Galla was piqued to the quick and became generous: "Come, then, you can have it for a hundred sesterces!" she said. Martial, whose desire for her had wholly passed, still found this sum exorbitant. Galla made a mouth and turned her back on him. One day she met him; he had just received a gift of one hundred quadrans or 25 pounds; she wished to have this gift, and she offered in exchange for it what she had formerly valued at 20,000 sesterces. Martial replied dryly that the gift was destined for his mignon, and went

his way. Galla had no ill feelings; she looked Martial up and wanted to give herself to him for nothing: "No, it is too late!" replied the capricious poet. Must we believe, from this epigram that Galla had become so contemptible and so different from her former self in these few years? Martial represents her at first as having espoused six or seven gitons, whose locks and whose well-combed beards had seduced her, but who had miserably deceived her amorous expectations:

*Deinde experta latus, madidoque simillima loro  
Inguina, nec lassâ stare coacta manu,  
Deseris imbelles thalamos, mollemque maritum.*

Martial advises her to seek compensation by making a choice among those rustics, robust and hairy, who speak only Fabian and Curian dialects; but he advises her on the other hand, not to be too sure of appearances, because there are also eunuchs among them: "It is difficult, Galla, to marry a true man," he tells her jokingly. They excuse impotence, they approve effeminate, when one assists at the toilet of Galla, who is no more than the shadow of what she was: "When you are in the house, your hair is absent and is being curled in a shop in the Suburran quarter; at night, you remove ten teeth as well as your robe of silk, and you sleep besmeared with a hundred pommades, but your face does not sleep with you (*nec facies tua tecum dormiat*)."<sup>1</sup> She regretted always having turned a deaf ear to the propositions of Martial and sought an occasion to be reconciled. She promised him marvels, she offered him a thousand allurements; but the poet, rancorous, remained deaf (*mentula surda est*) and was unable to recover his ancient disposition in the presence of this wrinkled face, these withered charms and grizzled locks, more capable of inspiring respect than love (*cani reverentia cunni*).

He seems to take a pleasure in biting back at his old loves, and he does not spare those who have not spared him. Thus, after having, with a frightful cynicism, shown us Phyllis, who

forces herself to satisfy two lovers at once, (Book X, Epigram 81), he does not conceal from us the fact that his senses no longer speak in tête-a-tête with this Phyllis, who gives him the tenderest names, the most passionate kisses, the most ardent caresses, and who yet cannot draw him out of his torpor (Book XI, Epigram 29). It is by irony, undoubtedly, that he indicates a surer method of working upon a young man, old woman though she may be; he whispers to her what she ought to say: "Look you, here are a hundred thousand sesterces, farms on the slopes of Setia, wine, houses, slaves, gold plate and furniture!" This Phyllis was, then, very rich, if Martial is not making use of a pleasant hyperbole to express the foolish promises which old women were in the habit of making their lovers when they were victims of the vertigo of sensual pleasure. However this may be, Phyllis, or another of the same name, reappeared upon the scene (Book XI, Epigram 50), and Martial, who no longer outrages her, but who has, rather, the air of supplicating her, complains of her lies and her rapacity: "Sometimes, it is your artful maid who comes to complain of the loss of your mirror, of your ring, or your earrings; sometimes, it is contraband silks which may be purchased cheaply; sometimes, it is perfumes which are needed to refill your scent box; then it is an amphora of Falernian, old and musty, in order to pay a gabbing old sorceress for curing your insomnia; then it is a monstrous sea-wolf or a two-pound mullet to regale the opulent lady friend to whom you are giving a supper. Out of modesty, O Phyllis, be true and be just at the same time; I refuse you nothing; so refuse nothing to me." How had that Phyllis whose own hand was so frozen a little while back—how had she become all of a sudden a desirable beauty and one who must be satisfied at any cost? The metamorphosis continues, and Martial's vows reach a climax: "The beautiful Phyllis, for one whole night, lent herself to all my phantasies (*se praestitisset omnibus modis largam*), and I thought the next morning of the present which I would make her, perhaps a pound of perfume of Cosmus or of Niceros, perhaps a good supply of the wool of

Spain, or perhaps ten pieces of gold with the effigy of Caesar. Phyllis leaps on my neck, caresses me, gives me kisses as long drawn out as the doves in their amours and ends by asking me for an amphora of wine.” Phyllis underwent a new transformation to her disadvantage, and Martial recognized the fact that he had been too hasty in retracting all the evil he had said of her before possessing her. It all might better be explained if this name of Phyllis designated two or three different courtesans, whom Martial had treated quite differently, beginning with disdain, passing to love, and ending with boredom.

The other courtesans who are to be met with here and there in the twelve books of Martial’s epigrams do not appear more than twice, and often but a single time; but we should beware of assuming, therefore, that they had made a less lively and less durable impression on the mobile and fantastic mind of the poet. We must never take literally the harsh names he calls them, which were perhaps but a threat of war in order to arrive the sooner at a truce. Thus, the first time that he was attached to the poor Lydia (Book XI, Epigram 21), he depicts her as incapable of inspiring love and giving pleasure (*Lydia tam laxa est, equitis quam culus aheni*) : he lets his libertine imagination go in the most monstrous follies, and we may rest convinced that he did not think of going back on his audacious judgments; but that was rather a brutal beginning of the matter it is true; his sentiment changed from the time he saw Lydia close up, when he recognized in her certain qualities which implied others; he does not yield on all these points, as a matter of fact, and he continues the war, in order not to appear to be laying down his arms too soon: “They do not lie, Lydia, when they say you have a beautiful complexion, if not a beautiful face. That is true, especially if you remain immobile and mute like a wax figure or a picture; but so soon as you speak, Lydia, you lose that beautiful complexion, and the tongue does no more harm to anyone than it does to you.” This was an adroit fashion of giving Lydia to understand that he asked no more than to be allowed to teach her how to speak, and that at need he would

speak for her. Martial had made his profession of faith with regard to his amorous tastes: "I prefer a girl of free condition," he said gaily, "but lacking that, I can content myself well enough with a freed woman. A slave would be my substitute; but I should prefer her to two others, if by her beauty she was worth to me a girl of free condition." It may be seen that Martial was not difficult to please where the origin of his mistresses was concerned, and they did not have to justify their lowly birth to him, since he did not share the prejudice of the old Romans, who saw a dishonor in the relations between a freeman and a slave girl. He did not rise up as a defender of the courtezans, who were often slaves, exploited and sold by a tyrannical and avaricious master; but he covers them often with a mantle of indulgence. When a Roman knight named Paulus beseeches him to make against Lysisca verses which will make her blush and irritate her, he refuses to lend himself to a cowardly vengeance and he turns the point of his epigram against Paulus himself. This Lysisca was perhaps the same one whose name Messalina took in order to gain admittance to a lupinar where she prostituted herself with the muleteers of Rome. At the time when Paulus was so bitter against her, she was looked upon as being merely one of the *fellatrices*, who were recruited from the ranks of courtezans, out of fashion and without employment. These unclean courtezans were so numerous in Martial's time that they are to be met with at every step in his epigrams, where they try their steel with the vilest of men and with children who practice the same trade. The poet preserves the air of reproving them, but he never manifests on this subject any indignation which would have constituted an anachronism in Roman manners. He is more indignant against the old prostitutes who persistently refuse to disappear from the scene and who offend the glances of voluptuous youths: "You have for women friends, Fabulla, only old and ugly hags, and uglier even than they are old; you have them follow you, you trail them after you at the feasts, under the porticos, at the games. It is thus, Fabulla, that you appear young and pretty." At thirty

years, among the Romans, a woman was no longer young; she was old at thirty-five, decrepit at forty. Martial lets us see, everywhere, his aversion and his distaste for women who had passed the age of sports and pleasures; he is ferocious and impitiable towards them; he pursues them with bitter sarcasm; he offers them no other alternative than to get out of the world, where they can be of no use except as scarecrows. Sila wants to marry him at any price, Sila who possesses as a dowry a million sesterces; but Sila is old, old, at least, in the eyes of Martial. He imposes, then, the most harsh and humiliating conditions: The bridal pair shall have separate beds, even the first night; he shall have his mistresses and his mignons, without her taking exception; he shall embrace them in front of her, without her having anything to say; at table, she shall keep herself always at a distance, in such a manner that their vestments, even, shall not touch; he will give her but rare kisses; she shall give him but the kisses of a grandmother; if she consents to all this, he consents to marry her, her and her sesterces. This horror of old age is a monomania with Martial, who is constantly pursued and saddened by the thought: he will be surrounded only by the fresh faces of women and children; the very idea of a superannuated mistress takes away from him instantly the faculty of loving and, if he makes an epitaph of an old woman who goes to join her lover in the tomb, he pictures her at once as inviting death to pay her his fee (*hoc tandem sipa prurit in sepulchro calvo Plotia, cum Melanthione*), and this odious image paralyzes him, even in his mistresses' arms; and yet, despite his horror of all that is not young, he seems to take delight in painting old age under its most revolting traits; he always has new colors for his palette, when he wants to make a portrait of an old woman; he is like those who have a fear of ghosts and who speak of them incessantly, as though to insure themselves against them. Never has a poet made faces of old women more grimacing, more hideous or more original. Horace himself is surpassed. The masterpiece of Martial in this genre is the following epigram, the terrifying energy of which we despair of being

able to render: “When you have lived under three hundred consuls, Vetustilla; when you have left but three hairs and four teeth; when you have the bosom of a grasshopper, the leg of an ant, a forehead more pleated than your stole, and breasts like spider’s webs; when the crocodile of the Nile has a narrow mouth by comparison with your grinders; when the frogs of Ravenna dress better than you, when the gnat of the Adriatic sings more sweetly, when you see no more clearly than hoot-owls in the morning, when you smell like he-goats, when you have the rump of a skinny goose; when the bath keeper, his lantern extinguished, admits you among the prostitutes of the cemetery; when the mouth of August is winter for you and when even the pernicious fever cannot thaw you out; ah, then! you will still be glad to marry again, after two hundred widowhoods, and you will still seek, in your madness, a husband who will be inflamed over your cinders! Is it not trying to till a rock? Who will ever call you his companion or his wife, you whom Philomelus once called his grandmother! But if you demand that one dissect your cadaver, let the surgeon Coricles prepare the table! . . . to him alone belongs the task of your marriage, and he who burns the dead shall bear before you the torches of the newly wed (*intrare in ipsum sola fax potest cunnum.*)” Martial, moreover, did not pride himself often on his gallantries toward courtezans; they inspired him only to doubtful compliments. Galla, who undoubtedly did not smell so well as a matter of fact, resembled the shop of Cosmus, where flagons were broken and essences spilled: “Do you not know,” Martial says to her, “that at that price my dog would smell as good?” (Book III, Epigram 55). Saufeia, the beautiful Saufeia, consents to give herself to him, but she refuses stubbornly to bathe with him. This refusal appeared suspicious to Martial, who wanted to know if Saufeia did not have a pendulous throat, a wrinkled belly and all the rest:

*Aut infinito lacerum patet inguen iatu;  
Aut aliquid cunni prominet ore tui.*

But having given rein to his imagination, he comes to the conclusion that Saufeia is a prude (*fatuaes*), and he leaves her (Book III, Epigram 72). As for Marulla, she does not receive company until being assured of what they weigh (Book X, Epigram 55). He pauses with Thelesilla only long enough to offer her an affront and to praise himself: he has won his spurs in love and yet, he is not sure of being able, once in four years to prove to Thelesilla a single time that he is a man (Book XI, Epigram 97). Pontia sends him game and cakes, writing to him that she is taking the morsels out of her own mouth to offer them to him: "Such morsels as those I would not send to anyone," says the cruel Martial, who recalls the fact that Pontis stinks in the mouth, "and it is a sure thing, I would not eat them." (Book VI, Epigram 75.) Lecania is served in the bath by a slave, whose sex is decently hidden by a girdle of black leather, and yet, young and old, bathe with her nude: "Is it that your slave," Martial asks her, "is the only one who is truly a man?" (Book VII, Epigram 75.) Ligella plucks out her superannuated charms, Ligella who has the age of Hector's mother, and who believes she is still of an age for amours: "If there is any modesty left you," Martial cries to her, "cease to pull the beard of a dead lion!" (Book X, Epigram 90.) Lyris is a drunkard and an abominable *fellatrix* (Book II, Epigram 73). Fescennia drinks even more than Lyris, but she eats pastils of Cosmus to neutralize the poison vapors of her stomach (Book I, Epigram 88). Senia tells that, passing one evening through a deserted street, she had been set upon by robbers, who were not content with robbing her: "You say so, Senia," replies Martial, "but the robbers deny it." (Book XII, Epigram 27.) Galla, in taking on years and lovers, has become rich and wise; Martial recognizes the fact but flees her, from fear of not being able to speak of love as he ought (*saepe solecismum mentula nostra facit*). Finally, Egle, who is pleasing to old men as well as young, and who gives the former the vigor of the latter, by teaching them all that the others know (Book XI, Epigram 91), Egle, sells her kisses and gives gratis

her most secret favors (Book XII, Epigram 55): “He who would have you give yourself gratis, young woman,” cries Martial, “he is the most stupid and perfidious of men! . . . give nothing gratis except kisses!”

The majority of the courtezans, as their names indicate, were not Greek. They did not come from so far away, and many of them came from the suburbs of Rome, where their mothers had sold them into Prostitution. The scruples and the prejudices of old Rome were gone; that Rome which would not have suffered her children to dishonor her by setting themselves up at auction. They still sought after Greek courtezans by paying them more dearly than the others; but so few were really of Greece, that they all, in order to grow rich, passed themselves off as Greeks, even in preserving their Latin names. And yet, some of them did not know a work of Greek; while others had nothing of the Greek type of beauty; those who had learned to speak Greek committed errors in every phrase they uttered; those who had adopted the Greek costume called it by a Roman name. One of these pretended daughters of Greece, named Selia, thought she would Hellenize herself sufficiently by refusing to rub elbows with the Romans: “You give yourself to Parthians,” Martial, whom she had treated as a Roman, told her, “you give yourself to Germans, you give yourself to Dacians; you do not disdain the beds of the Cilician and the Cappadocian; there comes to you an Egyptian lover from the city of Ceres, an Indian lover from the Red Sea; you do not flee the caresses of circumsized Jews; the Alanian on his Sarmatian horse, does not pass your house without stopping. How does it come that you, daughter of Rome, do not find pleasure with the Romans?”

*Quâ ratione facis, quum sis romana puella,  
Quod Romana tibi mentula nulla placet?*

This same Selia, whom a bad reading has made Lelia in another epigram (Book X, Epigram 68), had fixed in her memory a few

Greek words which she repeated on every occasion with a Roman accent: “Although you are neither of Ephesus nor of Rhodes, nor of Mitylene, but as a matter of fact, of a suburb of Rome; although your mother, who never perfumes herself, is of the race of swarthy Etruscans, and although your father is a rustic of the fields of Ericia, you are prodigal with your voluptuous words: *Zoe* and *psyche*. Oh, shame! you, a citizen of Hersilia and of Egeria! These words are only said in bed, and all beds should not hear them! . . . It is time for bed when a sweetheart has prepared herself for her tender lover. You desire to know what is the language of a chaste matron in such a circumstance; but if you did know, should you be any the more charming in the mysteries of pleasure (*numquid, quum, crissas blandior esse potes*)? Go on, you might learn and memorize by heart all Corinth, and yet, Selia, you would never be wholly Lais!” There is spite in these epigrams, and Martial does not conceal the fact that he would have liked to be loved in the Greek manner by this Roman Lais. When he does not accuse a courtezan of being decrepit, of smelling of wine, of being too rapacious, of devouring too many lovers, of having no more admirers, one may say, with some degree of certitude, that he has certain designs upon her, and that he is about to succeed; but he is, ordinarily, without regard and without pity for the mistress whom he abandons. It is, then, an extreme delicacy on his part not to insult nor defame Lycoris in leaving her for Glycera. “There was no woman whom I preferred to you, Lycoris,” he tells her, “adieu! there is no woman now whom I prefer to Glycera! She shall be what you are now; you can be no longer what she is; such is the work of time: I have wanted you, I want her now.” He does not say, then, anything more evil of Lycoris, who was brown of complexion, and who, in order to whiten her tint, went to establish herself upon the Tiber, where the lively air was looked upon as favorable to the skin (Book VII, Epigram 13). When she came back from the country, he remarked the fact that she was no whiter than she was, and he also perceived the fact that she squinted: Lycoris, it

is true, had taken in place of the poet a child as handsome as the shepherd Paris (Book III, Epigram 39). Martial seems to avoid confessing his mistresses. He proclaims them sufficiently when he praises them. Thus, in the presence of Chione and of Phlogis, he asks himself which of the two is the best built for love (Book XI, Epigram 60). Chione is more beautiful than Phlogis; but the latter has sensual charms which would give back his youth to the aged Nestor; charms which each one would like to meet in his mistress (*ulcus habet, quod habere suam vult quisque puellam*). Chione, on the contrary, experiences nothing (*at Chione non sentit opus*), any more or less than if she were marble; "O, gods!" cries Martial, "if it is permitted me to make a great prayer, and if you would accord me the most precious of blessings, give Phlogis the beautiful body of Chione, and Chione the other charms of Phlogis!"

The libertines of Rome were never at a loss for wishes of this sort; the play of their lubricious imagination was always in opposition with the reality of which they were tired or with which they were no longer contented. The career opened to these speculative fancies of the libertine was bounded by voluptuous horizons, toward which Martial loved to look. Among all the mistresses he had had, the one he did not possess always excited his most ardent desires. Polla, a courtezan gifted with more delicacy than others of her kind, had for the poet a tender feeling, which he had not sought to inspire; she did not resist this feeling, but abandoned herself to it with passion; she did not hesitate to declare it, and in order that Martial might be aware of it, she sent him coronals of flowers to speak for her. Martial received the wreaths and hung them up over his bed, according to the custom of lovers: "Why, Polla, do you send me these fresh garlands?" he wrote to her. "I should love better roses which you had withered (*a te malo vexatas tenere rosas*)."<sup>1</sup> Martial, in reply to the gracious invitation to an amour which these brilliant flowers had brought him, addressed to Polla only a libertine and repulsive thought; for he demanded that she let him know, by sending

him the garlands which she had worn at the feasts, the number of assaults which she had sustained. Martial, it may be seen, did not pride himself on his delicacy, on those impulses of the heart which distinguished the Greek poets, and which found but a weak echo in the erotic Latins of the century of Augustus. Did he desire, in a moment of sensual satiety, to picture the woman whom he would wish for a mistress, his mind did not seek her among virgins and matrons: "The one whom I want," he says, without blushing at his taste, "is the one who, easy in love, wanders here and there, veiled in the palliolum; the one I want is she who has given herself to my mignon before being mine; the one I want is she who sells herself in Tyre for two denarii; the one I want is she who can satisfy three at once. As to the one who demands crowns of gold and indulges in fine phrases, I leave her in the possession of certain citizens of Burdigala!" Martial had become gross in feeling, if not in language, by plunging into the slough of imperial debauchery. That contemptible society of courtezans and gitons which surrounded him had ended by depriving him of his moral sense and by blighting his heart.

He had even come to respect no longer his wife, Clodia Marcella, a Spaniard like himself and the companion of his fortune for thirty-five years. Shortly before returning with her to their native land, he had the sorry courage to address to her that disgraceful profession of faith, quite worthy of a consummate and incorrigible libertine: "My wife, go walk abroad, or else accustom yourself to my manners! I am neither a Curius nor a Numa nor a Tatius. Nights passed in emptying joyous goblets are my charm, while you hasten to rise from table after you have drunk a little sorry water; you like darkness, but I like a lamp to lighten my pleasures and love to do battle with Venus by the light of day; you wrap yourself in veils, in tunics and thick mantles; for me, a woman couched at my side is never nude enough; turtledove kisses are my delight, while those you give me resemble the ones you receive from your grandmother each morning. You never deign to second my amorous ardor, either in

words or with fingers or with the least movement, but are as immobile as though you were presenting the wine and incense at a sacrifice. Phrygian slaves soiled themselves behind the door each time Andromache was in Hector's arms. . . .”

*Masturbabantur Phrygii post ostia servi,  
Hectoreo quoties sederat uxor equo.  
Et, quamvis Ithaco stertente, pudica solebat  
Illic Penelope semper habere manum.  
Paedicare negas: dabat hoc Cornelia Graccho;  
Julia Pompeio; Porcia, Brute, tibi!  
Dulcia dardanio nondum miscente ministro  
Pocula, Juno fuit pro Ganymede Jovi.*

Martial did not blush to invoke the example of these infamies, which the great names cited must have absolved in the eyes of antiquity; but his wife did not care to imitate Juno any more than Porcia or Cornelia. Then the poet, indignant at finding so little compliance in his marital bed, wrote harshly: “Even if you do find it fitting to be a Lucretia all day long, by night I want a Lais.” But Lucretia was not slow in retaking her empire, which a decent woman never looks for in the realm of sensual caprice; it is permissible to suppose that the salutary influence of Marcella decided Martial to return to Bilbilis in Spain; she had property there which she held from her family; this property she gave over to her husband, and she succeeded in rescuing him from the abyss of Roman depravity, in the midst of which he had forgotten himself for thirty-five years. Martial found himself purified, as it were, when he no longer breathed the same air as the courtezans, the cinaedi, the procuresses, and the lenons, those vile agents of lust, those odious ministers to debauchery, who composed almost the entire population of Rome. He did not burn his books of epigrams, in which he had set down, so to speak, the deeds of Prostitution under the reigns of seven emperors; but he added an expiatory epigram, in which he im-

plicitly recognized the fact that he had led an evil life up to that time, and that happiness lay in a rural life, by the side of an estimable and well-loved wife: "This wood, these springs, this shady trellis, this rivulet of fresh water which irrigates the meadows, these fields of roses which do not yield to those of Pestum, and which flower twice a year; these peas, which are green in January and which are never frozen; these fish ponds where swims the domestic eel, this white tower which shelters the whitest of doves; these are the gifts of my wife after seven lustra of absence. Marcella has given me this domain, this little kingdom. If Nausicaa were to abandon to me the gardens of her father, I might say to Alcinous: 'I like my own better.' " This simple epigram is restful to the mind and heart after all the impurities which Martial seems to have accumulated with pleasure in his collection, where one is very much astonished to find a few instances of noble and virtuous indignation on the part of the poet.

Following is one of these honorable sallies which Martial makes against those unpunished vices which follow in the trail of Prostitution: "You say that you are poor in friends, Lups? You are not so with your mistress; there it is only your mentula which complains of you. She becomes fat, the adulteress, from the conchs of Venus filled with the flower of the wheat, while your guest makes his meal on black bread! The wine of Setia, which would inflame snow itself, flows in the glass of this mistress, while we, we drink muddy and poisonous liquor from the casks of Corsica. You buy a night or a part of a night with the heritage of your fathers, and the companion of your childhood labors alone in the fields which are not his own. Your prostitute gleams with the pearls of Erythrae, and while you are drunken with love, your client is being led to prison. You give to this girl a litter borne by eight Syrians, and your friend shall be placed naked upon his bier. Cybele, chastisement of miserable gitons, Lupinus's mentula ought rather to fall under your sacred knives!"

We have not the courage to let Martial speak on the subject

of masculine Prostitution, which seems to occupy him much more than that of women. It is difficult to form a conception of the state of demoralization into which ancient Rome had fallen with respect to the monstrous distractions of unnatural debauchery. We must read Martial in order to gain an idea of these disgusting manners, which, in the matter of love, had almost dethroned the feminine sex, and which had made of young boys and effeminate a new sex, devoted to shameful pleasures. We must read Martial in order to understand that age of corruption in which he led as bad a life as his contemporaries, and which dared look in the face and without horror the hideous promiscuities of the sexes among themselves. When we behold, in this collection of epigrams, the majority of them obscene, a panegyric of the Emperor Domitian following or preceding one in praise of mignons; when we meet, on one and the same page, an invocation to virtue, a prayer to some divinity, and an excitation to the most brazen pederasty, we are convinced that the moral sense had been perverted in Roman society. Among the Greeks, at least, if there was no more reticence in the matter of deeds, there was more decency, less grossness, in their expression. Undoubtedly, no more repugnance was attached to certain acts, reprehensible from the double point of view of human dignity and natural law; but this sensual degradation was relieved by making of it devotion, friendship and an ideal passion. Among the Romans, on the contrary, for every refinement, vice had become materialized by rejecting every sort of modest veil. The ears were no more respected than the eyes, and the heart appeared to have lost its instincts of delicacy in that moral induration which was the result of shameful habits. We do not desire to turn into the bypaths of Prostitution, which have nothing but repulsive and saddening sights to offer, in the presence of which our imagination would halt in fright. We prefer to send the reader to Martial himself and to the satirists of his century, Juvenal and Petronius. The first has said no less than Martial, but he has taken refuge in a concision, which often renders him obscure and, in that manner,

almost reserved; the commentators alone have supplemented his reticences, have borne the torch into the most discreet shadows; one enters with a sure step, but one is frightened by all that the poet has assembled in the way of turpitudes in this inferno of the Caesars. The second, under the form of a comic and licentious romance, has given us a painting of the excesses of his time; this romance is like a long hymn in honor of *Giton*, his horrible hero.

Petronius was, however, one of the cleverest and most refined of voluptuaries; Tacitus calls him the arbiter of good taste, and this name has remained with him, without implying an approbation of his manners, which the court of Nero alone could justify. Petronius, it is true, did not pride himself, like Juvenal, on being an incorruptible sage; he did not point out the infamies of his time in order to restrain others from them; he did not become at all indignant at the scandals which each one cynically detailed; he was amused, on the contrary; he was the first to laugh, and he had the air of regretting that he was not able to say more. His book is a fearful picture of the license of Rome, and when we reflect that we do not possess the tenth part of this romance of obscene adventures, it is easy to suppose that we have lost the most revolting episodes, the most infamous descriptions and the most characteristic filth, since the work of Petronius has been mutilated by Christian censorship, which, however, has not succeeded in wiping it out utterly. There remained enough impurities of every sort in the fragments which have come down to us to enable us to judge at once that work which was a delight of the Roman youth, the author who had executed this work from his own memories and his own personal impressions, and, finally, the epoch itself, which produced such authors and which tolerated such books. There are a score of passages in the *Satyricon*, which appear to have been written in a bad house, and the verve, the warmth and the petulance of the romancer bear witness to the excitation which he had sought in the arms of love before taking up his pen. We shall not recall the principal scenes of this erotic and sotadic drama, nor the orgy of Quartilla, nor that of Trimal-

chio, nor that of Circe; for in this strange romance, orgy follows orgy with terrible power, and the characters constantly move in an atmosphere surcharged with lust! Alcytus and Giton, whom Petronius is pleased to represent under the most seductive colors, are, nevertheless, types of baseness and perversity. The one, according to the expressions of the author himself, is a young adolescent stained with all the debaucheries, made a freed man and a citizen by Prostitution (*stupro liber, stupro ingenuus*), the slave of the one to whom a throw at dice had given him as a plaything, and who hired himself out as a girl to those who believed him to be a man; the other, the execrable Giton, takes the robe of a woman in the guise of the *toga virilis*, Petronius tells us, believing that from the cradle he has not been a member of his sex, and does the work of a prostitute in a den of slaves (*opus muliebre in ergastulo fecit*). After such portraits as these, one cannot refrain from astonishment at not finding them keeping their words better and doing what they had promised. Thus, the marriage of the little girl of seven years, Pannychis, with Giton, undoubtedly presented extraordinary details which would have disturbed the slumber of a rhetorician who had become a father of the Church, and which would have found little mercy at his chaste hand, despite the originality and richness of the recital. It is possible to form an impression of what is missing here from the prodigious scene which takes place in the sanctuary of the Temple of Priapus, when the hero of the place, having had the imprudence to kill the sacred geese, which tormented him, finds himself at the mercy of the priestess of the god Aenotheus and his companion Proselenos. The Latin, only, has the incontestable privilege of placing in relief such horrors as these, which the French would blush to reproduce, even by wrapping them in a transparent gauze. Here is the singular and indecent revenge which the two old women took on the poor slayer of the geese: “*Profert Aenothea scortum fascinum, quod ut oleo et minuto pipere, atque urticae trito circumdedit semine, paulatim cepit inserere ano meo. Hoc crudelissima anus spargit subinde hu-*

*more femina mea. Masturisi succum cum abrotono miscet, perfusisque inguinibus meis, viridis urtcae fascem comprehendit, omniaque infra umbilicum coepit lenta manu.*" This is perhaps the only passage in an ancient author in which there is question, from the erotic point of view, of flagellation with green nettles. It is inexplicable why the monks of the first centuries, who made so blind a warfare on the profane works of antiquity, should have permitted this frightful passage to remain in Petronius.

Almost all the aspects of ancient Prostitution are to be found in the *Satyricon*, where one meets only prostitutes, mignons, and love courtiers, all that is impure in the traffic of man and woman. Among these procuresses there figures a matron, one of the most respected, named Philumene, who, thanks to the favors of her youth, had put into escrow more than one testament; who, after age had withered her charms, hired out her son and daughter to old men without posterity, and maintained, by means of these successors, the reputation of her first trade. This Philumene sent her two children into the house of Eumolpus, a grave person, full of a capricious ardor, who had taken liberties with a vestal and who did not hesitate to invite the little one to the mysteries of Venus Callipyge (*non distulit puellam invitare ad Phygisiaca sacra*). Then the narrator, who fortunately speaks Latin, goes into details, which we shall not translate into a modest and colorless style. Eumolpus had told all the world that he was gouty and crippled in his loins: "*Itaque, ut constaret mendacio fides, puellam quidem exoravit, ut sederet supra commendatam bonitatem. Coraci autem imperavit, ut lectum, in quo ipse jacebat, subiret, positisque in pavimento manibus, dominum lumbis suis commoveret. Ille lento parebat imperio, puellaeque artificium pari motu remunerabat.*" Such is, in a manner, the final picture of the romance. The little pieces of verse which have been collected at the end, and which are supposed to have been part of the text which was suppressed or lost, contain a few amorous lines, addressed evidently to courtezans, who are made known to us by eulogies rather than by epigrams in the manner of Martial.

Petronius was too much a friend to gentle and agreeable things to become envenomed against these creatures, with whom he sought only pleasure. Sertoria is the only one whom he mistreats a little, and that perhaps with good intention, in order to correct her habit of rouging herself unnecessarily: "It is a loss at once," he tells her, "of your rouge and of your face!" When Marcia sends him from the country spiny chestnuts and perfumed oranges, he tells her to bring her presents in person or to add a gift of kisses to that of fruits: "I will eat them all together (*vorabo lubens*)", he says to this amiable companion. But another is at his side, another whom he does not name; she wears a rose upon her throat: "That rose," he says gallantly, "draws from your breast am ambrosial dew, and it is then that it truly smells the rose!" At night, he is half awake under the spell of a charming dream; he hears the voice of Delia, who speaks to him of love and who imprints a kiss on his forehead; he calls to her in turn, he extends to her his arms; but he finds nothing about him except silence and the night: "Alas!" he murmurs, "it was an echo in my heart and in my ear!" But to Delia succeeds Arethusa, the ardent Arethusa with golden hair, who comes with discreet steps into her lover's bedroom, and who is already trembling beside him; she does not fall asleep, this foolish mistress! She imitates, curiously, the poses and the voluptuous inventions which she has studied in the famous code of pleasure and in the designs which accompany it (*dulces imitata tabellas*): "Blush at nothing," Petronius tells her, encouragingly, "be more libertine than I!" (*Nec pudeat quidquam, sed me quoque nequior ipsa.*) Bassilissa does not offer him so much, however; she only accords her favors when she has been warned in advance (*et nisi praemonui, te dare posse negas*). Petronius praises the delights of the unexpected: "The pleasures born of chance," he tells her humorously, "are worth more than those which have been pre-meditated in letters." It was, probably, to revenge himself for the calculated resistances of Bassilissa that he reproached the latter with putting too much rouge on her cheeks and too much

pomade in her hair: “To disguise yourself unceasingly,” he tells her rudely, “is to show no faith in love (*fingere te semper non est confidere amori*).” Petronius, rich and generous, handsome and well-built, impatient and indefatigable in pleasure, multiplied his amours and changed his mistresses every day. He would have died of exhaustion and debauchery, if Nero’s wrath had not forced him to open his own veins in order to escape the fear of punishment which threatened his troubled life; he would have preferred a death slower and more voluptuous, for he was accustomed to repeat this axiom, which he so largely put into practice: “Baths, wines and love destroy the health of the body, and yet the happiness of life lies in baths, wines and love.”

*Balnea, vina, Venus, corrumpunt corpora, sana;  
Et vitam faciunt balnea, vina, Venus.*

(End of Volume I)









